

Christopher B. Siren's

Ancient Middle Eastern Mythologies

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Expanded and amplified with links to additional resources.

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[Sumerian Religion](#)

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[List of Mesopotamian deities](#)

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[Hittite/Hurrian](#), FAQ by C. Siren

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[Mitanni](#)

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[Hittites/Hurrians](#), Google search of Upenn online books

[Hittites](#), from *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906), by Richard Gottheil, Louis H. Gray

[Hittites](#), Google search of AWOL (The Ancient World Online)

[Hittites](#), Google search of *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*,
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[Canaanite](#), FAQ by C. Siren

Wikipedia:

[Canaanite Religion](#), with list of deities

[Canaanite Mythology](#), Google search of Wikipedia

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Egyptian [not part of C. Siren's application]

Wikipedia:

[Egyptian Mythology](#)

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Sumerian Mythology FAQ (Version 2.0.html)

By Christopher Siren, 1992, 1994, 2000

Last changes: July 27, 2000: complete revision including incorporating Kramer's *Sumerian Mythology* and Black & Green's *God's Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*. Added more citations of sources.

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I. History and Overview -

Sumer may very well be the first civilization in the world (although long term settlements at Jericho and Çatal Hüyük predate Sumer and examples of writing from Egypt and the Harappa, Indus valley sites *may* predate those from Sumer). From its beginnings as a collection of farming villages around 5000 BCE, through its conquest by Sargon of Agade around 2370 BCE and its final collapse under the Amorites around 2000 BCE, the Sumerians developed a religion and a society which influenced both their neighbors and their conquerors. Sumerian cuneiform, the earliest written language, was borrowed by the Babylonians, who also took many of their religious beliefs. In fact, traces and parallels of Sumerian myth can be found in Genesis.

History

Sumer was a collection of city states around the Lower Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is now southern Iraq. Each of these cities had individual rulers, although as early as the mid-fourth millennium BCE the leader of the dominant city could have been considered the king of the region. The history of Sumer tends to be divided into five periods. They are the Uruk period, which saw the dominance of the city of that same name, the Jemdat Nasr period, the Early Dynastic periods, the Agade period, and the Ur III period - the entire span lasting from 3800 BCE to around 2000 BCE. In addition, there is evidence of the Sumerians in the area both prior to the Uruk period and after the Ur

III Dynastic period, but relatively little is known about the former age and the latter time period is most heavily dominated by the Babylonians.

The **Uruk** period, stretched from 3800 BCE to 3200 BCE. It is to this era that the Sumerian King Lists ascribe the reigns of [Dumuzi](#) the shepherd, and the other antediluvian kings. After his reign Dumuzi was worshipped as the god of the spring grains. This time saw an enormous growth in urbanization such that Uruk probably had a population around 45,000 at the period's end. It was easily the largest city in the area, although the older cities of Eridu to the south and Kish to the north may have rivaled it. Irrigation improvements as well as a supply of raw materials for craftsmen provided an impetus for this growth. In fact, the city of [An](#) and [Inanna](#) also seems to have been at the heart of a trade network which stretched from what is now southern Turkey to what is now eastern Iran. In addition people were drawn to the city by the great temples there.

The Eanna of Uruk, a collection of temples dedicated to Inanna, was constructed at this time and bore many mosaics and frescoes. These buildings served civic as well as religious purposes, which was fitting as the en, or high priest, served as both the spiritual and temporal leader. The temples were places where craftsmen would practice their trades and where surplus food would be stored and distributed.

The **Jemdat Nasr** period lasted from 3200 BCE to 2900 BCE. It was not particularly remarkable and most adequately described as an extension and slowing down of the Uruk period. This is the period during which the great flood is supposed to have taken place. The Sumerians' account of the flood may have been based on a flooding of the Tigris, Euphrates, or both rivers onto their already marshy country.

The **Early Dynastic** period ran from 2900 BCE to 2370 BCE and it is this period for which we begin to have more reliable written accounts although some of the great kings of this era later evolved mythic tales about them and were deified. Kingship moved about 100 miles upriver and about 50 miles south of modern Baghdad to the city of Kish. One of the earlier kings in Kish was [Etana](#) who "stabilized all the lands" securing the First Dynasty of Kish and establishing rule over Sumer and some of its neighbors. Etana was later believed by the Babylonians to have rode to heaven on the back of a giant Eagle so that he could receive the "plant of birth" from Ishtar (their version of Inanna) and thereby produce an heir.

Meanwhile, in the south, the Dynasty of Erech was founded by Meskiaggasher, who, along with his successors, was termed the "son of Utu", the sun-god. Following three other kings, including another Dumuzi, the famous Gilgamesh took the throne of Erech around 2600 BCE and became involved in a power struggle for the region with the Kish Dynasts and with Mesannepadda, the founder of the Dynasty of Ur. While Gilgamesh became a demi-god, remembered in epic tales, it was Mesannepadda who was eventually victorious in this three-way power struggle, taking the by then traditional title of "King of Kish".

Although the dynasties of Kish and Erech fell by the wayside, Ur could not retain a strong hold over all of Sumer. The entire region was weakened by the struggle and individual city-states continued more or less independent rule. The rulers of Lagash declared themselves "Kings of Kish" around 2450 BCE, but failed to seriously control the region, facing several military challenges by the nearby Umma. Lugalzagesi, *ensi* or priest-king of Umma from around 2360-2335 BCE, razed Lagash, and conquered Sumer, declaring himself "king of Erech and the Land". Unfortunately for him, all of this strife made Sumer ripe for conquest by an outsider and Sargon of Agade seized that opportunity.

Sargon united both Sumer and the northern region of Akkad - from which Babylon would arise about four hundred years later - not very far from Kish. Evidence is sketchy, but he may have extended his realm from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River. This unity would survive its founder by less than 40 years. He built the city of Agade and established an enormous court there and he had a new temple erected in Nippur. Trade from across his new empire and beyond swelled the city, making it the center of world culture for a brief time.

After Sargon's death, however, the empire was fraught with rebellion. Naram-Sin, Sargon's grandson and third successor, quelled the rebellions through a series of military successes, extending his realm. He declared himself 'King of the Four corners of the World' and had himself deified. His divine powers must have failed him as the Gutis, a mountain people, razed Agade and deposed Naram-Sin, ending that dynasty.

After a few decades, the Gutis became intolerable for the Sumerian leaders. Utuhegal of Uruk/Erech rallied a coalition army and ousted them. One of his lieutenants, Ur-Nammu, usurped his rule and established the **third Ur dynasty** around 2112 BCE. He consolidated his control by defeating a rival dynasty in Lagash and soon gained control of all of the Sumerian city-states. He established the earliest known recorded law-codes and had constructed the great ziggurat of Ur, a kind of step-pyramid which stood over 60' tall and more than 200' wide. For the next century the Sumerians were extremely prosperous, but their society collapsed around 2000 BCE under the invading Amorites. A couple of city-states maintained their independence for a short while, but soon they and the rest of the Sumerians were absorbed into the rising empire of the Babylonians. (Crawford pp. 1-28; Kramer 1963 pp. 40-72)

Culture

Seated along the Euphrates River, Sumer had a thriving agriculture and trade industry. Herds of sheep and goats and farms of grains and vegetables were held both by the temples and private citizens. Ships plied up and down the river and throughout the Persian Gulf, carrying pottery and various processed goods and bringing back fruits and various raw materials from across the region, including cedars from the Levant.

Sumer was one of the first literate civilizations leaving many records of business transactions, and lessons from schools. They had strong armies, which with their chariots and phalanxes held sway over their less civilized neighbors (Kramer 1963, p. 74). Perhaps the most lasting cultural remnants of the Sumerians though, can be found in their religion.

Religion

The religion of the ancient Sumerians has left its mark on the entire middle east. Not only are its temples and ziggurats scattered about the region, but the literature, cosmogony and rituals influenced their neighbors to such an extent that we can see echoes of Sumer in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition today. From these ancient temples, and to a greater extent, through cuneiform writings of hymns, myths, lamentations, and incantations, archaeologists and mythographers afford the modern reader a glimpse into the religious world of the Sumerians.

Each city housed a temple that was the seat of a major god in the Sumerian pantheon, as the gods controlled the powerful forces which often dictated a human's fate. The city leaders had a duty to please the town's patron deity, not only for the good will of that god or goddess, but also for the good will of the other deities in the council of gods. The priesthood initially held this role, and even after

secular kings ascended to power, the clergy still held great authority through the interpretation of omens and dreams. Many of the secular kings claimed divine right; Sargon of Agade, for example claimed to have been chosen by [Ishtar/ Inanna](#). ([Crawford](#) 1991: 21-24)

The rectangular central shrine of the temple, known as a 'cella,' had a brick altar or offering table in front of a statue of the temple's deity. The cella was lined on its long ends by many rooms for priests and priestesses. These mud-brick buildings were decorated with cone geometrical mosaics, and the occasional fresco with human and animal figures. These temple complexes eventually evolved into towering ziggurats. ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) 1983: 119)

The temple was staffed by priests, priestesses, musicians, singers, castrates and hierodules. Various public rituals, food sacrifices, and libations took place there on a daily basis. There were monthly feasts and annual, New Year celebrations. During the later, the king would be married to Inanna as the resurrected fertility god Dumuzi, whose exploits are dealt with below.

When it came to more private matters, a Sumerian remained devout. Although the gods preferred justice and mercy, they had also created evil and misfortune. A Sumerian had little that he could do about it. Judging from Lamentation records, the best one could do in times of duress would be to "plead, lament and wail, tearfully confessing his sins and failings." Their family god or city god might intervene on their behalf, but that would not necessarily happen. After all, man was created as a broken, labor saving, tool for the use of the gods and at the end of everyone's life, lay the underworld, a generally dreary place. ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) 1983: pp.123-124)

II. What do we know about Sumerian Cosmology?

From verses scattered throughout hymns and myths, one can compile a picture of the universe's (anki) creation according to the Sumerians. The primeval sea (abzu) existed before anything else and within that, the heaven (an) and the earth (ki) were formed. The boundary between heaven and earth was a solid (perhaps tin) vault, and the earth was a flat disk. Within the vault lay the gas-like 'lil', or atmosphere, the brighter portions therein formed the stars, planets, sun, and moon. ([Kramer](#), The Sumerians 1963: pp. 112-113) Each of the four major Sumerian deities is associated with one of these regions. [An](#), god of heaven, may have been the main god of the pantheon prior to 2500 BC., although his importance gradually waned. (Kramer 1963 p. 118) Ki is likely to be the original name of the earth goddess, whose name more often appears as [Ninhursag](#) (queen of the mountains), Ninmah (the exalted lady), or Nintu (the lady who gave birth). It seems likely that these two were the progenitors of most of the gods.

According to "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld", in the first days all needed things were created. Heaven and earth were separated. An took Heaven, Enlil took the earth, Ereshkigal was carried off to the netherworld as a prize, and Enki sailed off after her.

III. What Deities did they worship?

Nammu

Nammu is the Goddess of the watery abyss, the primeval sea. She may be the earliest of deities within Sumerian cosmology as she gave birth to heaven and earth. (Kramer 1961 p. 39) She is elsewhere described both as the mother of all the gods and as the wife of [An](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 114) She is [Enki](#)'s mother. She prompts him to create servants for the gods and is then directed

by him on how, with the help of Nimmah/ [Ninhursag](#) to create man. (Kramer 1963 p. 150; Kramer 1961 p. 70)

A. The Primary Deities

It is notable that the Sumerians themselves may not have grouped these four as a set and that the grouping has been made because of the observations of Sumerologists.

An

An, god of heaven, may have been the main god of the pantheon prior to 2500 BC., although his importance gradually waned. (Kramer 1963 p. 118) In the early days he carried off heaven, while [Enlil](#) carried away the earth. (Kramer 1961 p. 37-39) It seems likely that he and Ki/ [Ninhursag](#) were the progenitors of most of the gods. although in one place [Nammu](#) is listed as his wife. (Kramer 1961 p. 114) Among his children and followers were the Anunnaki. (Kramer 1961 p. 53) His primary temple was in Erech. He and Enlil give various gods, goddesses, and kings their earthly regions of influence and their laws. (Kramer 1963 p. 124) Enki seats him at the first seat of the table in Nippur at the feast celebrating his new house in Eridu. (Kramer 1961 p. 63) He hears [Inanna's](#) complaint about Mount Ebih (Kur?), but discourages her from attacking it because of its fearsome power. (Kramer 1961 pp. 82-83) After the flood, he and Enlil make [Ziusudra](#) immortal and make him live in Dilmun. (Kramer 1961 p. 98) (See also [Anu](#).)

Ninhursag (Ki, Ninmah, Nintu)

Ki is likely to be the original name of the earth goddess, whose name more often appears as Ninhursag (queen of the mountains), Ninmah (the exalted lady), or Nintu (the lady who gave birth). (Kramer 1963 p. 122) Most often she is considered Enlil's sister, but in some traditions she is his spouse instead. (Jacobsen p.105) She was born, possibly as a unified cosmic mountain with [An](#), from [Nammu](#) and shortly thereafter, their union produced [Enlil](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 74) In the early days, as Ki, she was separated from heaven (An) and carried off by Enlil. (Kramer 1961 pp. 37-41) It seems likely that she and An were the progenitors of most of the gods. She later unites with Enlil and with the assistance of Enki they produce the world's plant and animal life. (Kramer 1961 p. 75)

"Enki and Ninhursag"

In Dilmun, she (as Nintu) bears the goddess Ninsar from Enki, who in turn bears the goddess Ninkur, who in turn bears Uttu, goddess of plants. Uttu bore eight new trees from Enki. When he then ate Uttu's children, Ninhursag cursed him with eight wounds and disappears. After being persuaded by Enlil to undo her curse, she bore Enki eight new children which undid the wounds of the first ones. (Kramer 1963 pp. 147-149; Kramer 1961 pp. 54-59)

Enki seats her (as Nintu) on the big side of the table in Nippur at the feast celebrating his new house in Eridu. (Kramer 1961 p. 63)

"Enki and Ninmah"

She is the mother goddess and, as Ninmah, assists in the creation of man. Enki, having been propted by Nammu to create servants for the gods, describes how Nammu and Ninmah will help fashion man from clay. Prior to getting to work, she and Enki drink overmuch at a feast. She then shapes six flawed versions of man from the heart of the clay over the Abzu, with Enki declaring their fates. Enki, in turn also creates a flawed man which is unable to eat. Ninmah

appears to curse him for the failed effort. (Kramer 1963 pp. 149-151; Kramer 1961 pp. 69-72)
(See also [Aruru](#))

Enlil

[An](#) and [Ki](#)'s union produced Enlil (Lord of 'lil'). Enlil was the air-god and leader of the pantheon from at least 2500 BC, when his temple Ekur in Nippur was the spiritual center of Sumer (Kramer 1961 p. 47). In the early days he separated and carried off the earth (Ki) while An carried off heaven. (Kramer 1961 p. 37-41) He assumed most of An's powers. He is glorified as "'the father of the gods, 'the king of heaven and earth,' ' the king of all the lands'". Kramer portrays him as a patriarchal figure, who is both creator and disciplinarian. Enlil causes the dawn, the growth of plants, and bounty (Kramer 1961 p. 42). He also invents agricultural tools such as the plow or pickaxe (Kramer 1961 pp 47-49). Without his blessings, a city would not rise (Kramer 1961 pp. 63, 80) Most often he is considered Ninlil's husband, with Ninhursag as his sister, but some traditions have Ninhursag as his spouse. (Jacobsen p.105) "Enlil and Ninlil" He is also banished to the nether world (kur) for his rape of [Ninlil](#), his intended bride, but returns with the first product of their union, the moon god Sin (also known as [Nanna](#)). (Kramer, Sumerians 1963: pp.145-147). Ninlil follows him into exile as his wife. He tells the various underworld guardians to not reveal his whereabouts and instead poses as those guardians himself three times, each time impregnating her again it appears that at least on one occasion Enlil reveals his true self before they unite. The products of these unions are three underworld deities, including Meslamtaea (aka. [Nergal](#)) and Ninazu. Later, when Nanna visits him in Nippur, he bestows Ur to him with a palace and plentiful plantlife. (Kramer 1961 p. 43-49) Enlil is also seen as the father of [Ninurta](#) (Kramer 1961 p. 80).

"Enki and Eridu"

When Enki journeys to Enlil's city Nippur in order for his own city, Eridu to be blessed. He is given bread at Enki's feast and is seated next to An, after which Enlil proclaims that the Anunnaki should praise Enki. (Kramer 1961 pp. 62-63)

"The Dispute between Cattle and Grain"

Enlil and Enki, at Enki's urging, create farms and fields for the grain goddess [Ashnan](#) and the cattle goddess [Lahar](#). This area has places for Lahar to take care of the animals and Ashnan to grow the crops. The two agricultural deities get drunk and begin fighting, so it falls to Enlil and Enki to resolve their conflict - how they do so has not been recovered. (Kramer 1961 pp. 53-54; Kramer 1963 pp. 220-223)

"The Dispute between Emesh and Enten"

Enlil creates the herdsman deity Enten and the agricultural deity Emesh. He settles a dispute between Emesh and Enten over who should be recognized as 'farmer of the gods', declaring Enten's claim to be stronger. (Kramer 1961 p. 49-51).

"Enki and Ninhursag"

He helps Enki again when he was cursed by [Ninhursag](#). Enlil and a fox entreat her to return and undo her curse. (Kramer 1961 p. 57)

"Enki and the World Order"

The [me](#) were assembled by Enlil in his temple Ekur, and given to Enki to guard and impart to the world, beginning with Eridu, Enki's center of worship. (Kramer 1963 pp. 171-183)

"Inanna's Descent to the Nether World"

Enlil refuses Ninshubur's appeal on behalf of his [grand-]daughter, [Inanna](#) to help rescue her

from Ereshkigal in the underworld. (Kramer 1961 pp. 86, 87, 89, 93)

"Ziusudra"

After the flood, he and An gave Ziusudra eternal life and had him live in Dilmun. (Kramer 1961 p. 98)

"Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld"

When [Gilgamesh](#) looses his *pukku* and *mikku* in the nether world, and [Enkidu](#) is held fast there by demons, he appeals to Enlil for help. Enlil refuses to assist him. (Kramer 1961 p. 35-36)
(See also the Babylonian [Ellil](#))

Enki

Enki is the son of [Nammu](#), the primeval sea. Contrary to the translation of his name, Enki is not the lord of the earth, but of the abzu (the watery abyss and also semen) and of wisdom. This contradiction leads Kramer and Maier to postulate that he was once known as En-kur, lord of the underworld, which either contained or was contained in the Abzu. He did struggle with Kur as mentioned in the prelude to "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Underworld", and presumably was victorious and thereby able to claim the title "Lord of Kur" (the realm). He is a god of water, creation, and fertility. He also holds dominion over the land. He is the keeper of the [me](#), the divine laws. ([Kramer & Maier](#) Myths of Enki 1989: pp. 2-3) "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Underworld"

Enki sails for the Kur, presumably to rescue [Ereshkigal](#) after she was given over to Kur. He is assailed by creatures with stones. These creatures may have been an extension of Kur itself. (Wolkstein and Kramer p. 4; Kramer 1961 p. 37-38, 78-79)

"Enki and Eridu" Enki raises his city Eridu from the sea, making it very lush. He takes his boat to Nippur to have the city blessed by Enlil. He throws a feast for the gods, giving Enlil, An, and Nintu special attention. After the feast, Enlil proclaims that the Anunnaki should praise Enki. (Kramer 1961; pp. 62-63)

"Enki and the World Order"

The *me* were assembled by [Enlil](#) in Ekur and given to Enki to guard and impart to the world, beginning with Eridu, his center of worship. From there, he guards the *me* and imparts them on the people. He directs the *me* towards Ur and Meluhha and Dilmun, organizing the world with his decrees. (Kramer 1963 pp. 171-183)

"The Dispute between Cattle and Grain"

Enlil and Enki, at Enki's urging, create farms and fields for the grain goddess [Ashnan](#) and the cattle goddess Lahar. This area has places for Lahar to take care of the animals and Ashnan to grow the crops. The two agricultural deities get drunk and begin fighting, so it falls to Enlil and Enki to resolve their conflict - how they do so has not been recovered. (Kramer 1961 pp. 53-54; Kramer 1963 pp. 220-223)

"Enki and Ninhursag"

He blessed the paradisaical land of Dilmun, to have plentiful water and palm trees. He sires the goddess Ninsar upon [Ninhursag](#), then sires Ninkur upon Ninsar, finally siring Uttu, goddess of plants, upon Ninkur. Uttu bore eight new types of trees from Enki. He then consumed these tree-children and was cursed by Ninhursag, with one wound for each plant consumed. [Enlil](#) and a fox act on Enki's behalf to call back Ninhursag in order to undo the damage. She joins with Enki again and bears eight new children, one to cure each of the wounds. (Kramer 1963 pp. 147-149; Kramer 1961 pp. 54-59)

"Enki and Ninmah: The Creation of Man"

The gods complain that they need assistance. At his mother Nammu's prompting, he directs her, along with some constructive criticism from Ninmah (Ninhursag), in the creation of man from the heart of the clay over the Abzu. Several flawed versions were created before the final version was made. (Kramer 1963 pp. 149-151; Kramer 1961 pp. 69-72)

"Inanna's Descent to the Nether World"

He is friendly to [Inanna](#) and rescued her from Kur by sending two sexless beings to negotiate with, and flatter Ereshkigal. They gave her the Food of Life and the Water of Life, which restored her. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 62-64)

"Inanna and Enki"

Later, [Inanna](#) comes to Enki and complains at having been given too little power from his decrees. In a different text, she gets Enki drunk and he grants her more powers, arts, crafts, and attributes - a total of ninety-four *me*. Inanna parts company with Enki to deliver the *me* to her cult center at Erech. Enki recovers his wits and tries to recover the *me* from her, but she arrives safely in Erech with them. (Kramer & Maier 1989: pp. 38-68)

(See also [Ea](#))

III B. The Seven Who Decreed Fate

In addition to the four primary deities, there were hundreds of others. A group of seven "decreed the fates" - these probably included the [first four](#), as well as [Nanna](#), his son [Utu](#), the sun god and a god of justice, and Nanna's daughter Inanna, goddess of love and war.

Nanna (Sin, (Suen), Ashgirbabbar)

Nanna is another name for the moon god [Sin](#). He is the product of [Enlil](#)'s rape of [Ninlil](#). (Kramer, 1963, pp. 146-7.) He travels across the sky in his gufa, (a small, canoe-like boat made of woven twigs and tar), with the stars and planets about him. (Kramer 1961 p. 41) Nanna was the tutelary deity of Ur (Kramer 1963 p. 66), appointed as king of that city by [An](#) and Enlil. (Kramer 1963 pp. 83-84) He journeyed to Nippur by boat, stopping at five cities along the way. When he arrived at Nippur, he proffered gifts to Enlil and pleaded with him to ensure that his city of Ur would be blessed, prosperous, and thus, not be flooded. (Kramer 1963 pp. 145-146, Kramer 1961 pp. 47-49) Nanna was married to Ningal and they produced [Inanna](#) and [Utu](#). (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 30-34; Kramer 1961 p. 41) He rests in the Underworld every month, and there decrees the fate of the dead. (Kramer 1963 p. 132, 135, 210) He refuses to send aid to Inanna when she is trapped in the underworld. (Kramer 1963 pp. 153-154) He established Ur-Nammu as his mortal representative, establishing the third Ur dynasty. (Kramer 1963 p. 84)

Utu

Utu is the son of [Nanna](#) and [Ningal](#) and the god of the Sun and of Justice. He goes to the underworld at the end of every day setting in the "mountain of the west" and rising in the "mountain of the east". While there decrees the fate of the dead, although he also may lie down to sleep at night. (Kramer 1963 p. 132, 135; Kramer 1961 pp. 41-42) He is usually depicted with fiery rays coming out of his shoulders and upper arms, and carrying a saw knife. (Kramer 1961 p. 40) When [Inanna](#)'s *huluppu* tree is infested with unwelcome guests, he ignores her appeal for aid. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 6-7) He tries to set her up with Dumuzi, the shepherd, but she initially rebuffs him, preferring the farmer. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 30-33) He aided [Dumuzi](#) in his flight from the galla demons by helping him to transform into different creatures.

(Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 72-73, 81) Through Enki's orders, he also brings water up from the earth in order to irrigate Dilmun, the garden paradise, the place where the sun rises. (Kramer 1963 p. 148) He is in charge of the "Land of the Living" and, in sympathy for Gilgamesh, calls off the seven weather heroes who defend that land. (Kramer 1963 pp. 190-193) He opened the "abla" of the Underworld for the shade of [Enkidu](#), to allow him to escape, at the behest of [Enki](#). (Kramer 1963 p. 133; Kramer 1961 p. 36)
(See also [Shamash](#))

Inanna

[Nanna](#) and [Ningal](#)'s daughter Inanna, goddess of love and war. "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Underworld"

A woman planted the huluppu tree in Inanna's garden, but the Imdugud-bird (Anzu bird?) made a nest for its young there, Lilith (or her predecessor, a lilitu-demon) made a house in its trunk, and a serpent made a home in its roots. Inanna appeals to [Utu](#) about her unwelcome guests, but he is unsympathetic. She appeals to Gilgamesh, here her brother, and he is receptive. He tears down the tree and makes it into a throne and bed for her. In return for the favor, Inanna manufactures a *pukku* and *mikku* for him. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 5-9)

"Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven"

Later, Inanna seeks out Gilgamesh as her lover. When he spurns her she sends the [Bull of Heaven](#) to terrorize his city of Erech. (Kramer 1963 p. 262)

"The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi"

Her older brother Utu tries to set her up with Dumuzi, the shepherd, but she initially rebuffs him, preferring the farmer. He assures her that his parents are as good as hers and she begins to desire him. Her mother, Ningal, further assures her. The two consummate their relationship and with their exercise in fertility, the plants and grains grow as well. After they spend time in the marriage bed, Inanna declares herself as his battle leader and sets his duties as including sitting on the throne and guiding the path of weapons. At Ninshubur's request, she gives him power over the fertility of plants and animals. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 30-50)

"Inanna's Descent to the Nether World"

Inanna also visits Kur, which results in a myth reminiscent of the Greek seasonal story of Persephone. She sets out to witness the funeral rites of her sister-in-law [Ereshkigal](#)'s husband Gugalanna, the Bull of Heaven. She takes precaution before setting out, by telling her servant Ninshubur to seek assistance from [Enlil](#), [Nanna](#), or [Enki](#) at their shrines, should she not return. Inanna knocks on the outer gates of Kur and the gatekeeper, Neti, questions her. He consults with queen Ereshkigal and then allows Inanna to pass through the seven gates of the underworld. After each gate, she is required to remove adornments and articles of clothing, until after the seventh gate, she is naked. The Annuna pass judgment against her and Ereshkigal killed her and hung her on the wall. (see [Ereshkigal](#)) ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) 1983 pp. 52-60)

Inanna is rescued by the intervention of [Enki](#). He creates two sexless creatures that empathize with Ereshkigal's suffering, and thereby gain a gift - Inanna's corpse. They restore her to life with the Bread of Life and the Water of Life, but the Sumerian underworld has a conservation of death law. No one can leave without providing someone to stay in their stead. Inanna is escorted by galla/demons past Ninshubur and members of her family. She doesn't allow them to claim anyone until she sees [Dumuzi](#) on his throne in Uruk. They then seize Dumuzi, but he escapes them twice by transforming himself, with the aid of [Utu](#). Eventually he is caught and slain. Inanna spies his sister, [Geshtinanna](#), in mourning and they go to Dumuzi. She allows Dumuzi,

the shepherd, to stay in the underworld only six months of the year, while Geshtinanna will stay the other six. (Wolkstein & Kramer pp. 60-89) As with the Greek story of the kidnapping of Persephone, this linked the changing seasons, the emergence of the plants from the ground, with the return of a harvest deity from the nether world. Geshtinanna is also associated with growth, but where her brother rules over the spring harvested grain, she rules over the autumn harvested vines ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) p. 168).

"Inanna and Mount Ebih"

Inanna complains to [An](#) about Mount Ebih ([Kur](#)?) demanding that it glorify her and submit lest she attack it. An discourages her from doing so because of its fearsome power. She does so anyway, bringing a storehouse worth of weapons to bear on it. She destroys it. Because she is known as the Destroyer of Kur in certain hymns, Kramer identifies Mt. Ebih with Kur. (Kramer 1961 pp. 82-83)

"Inanna and Enki"

The [me](#) were universal decrees of divine authority -the invocations that spread arts, crafts, and civilization. [Enki](#) became the keeper of the *me*. Inanna comes to Enki and complains at having been given too little power from his decrees. In a different text, she gets Enki drunk and he grants her more powers, arts, crafts, and attributes - a total of ninety-four *me*. Inanna parts company with Enki to deliver the *me* to her cult center at Erech. Enki recovers his wits and tries to recover the *me* from her, but she arrives safely in Erech with them. ([Kramer & Maier](#) 1989: pp. 38-68)
(See also [Ishtar](#))

III. C. The Annuna (Anunnaki) and others

At the next level were fifty "great gods", possibly the same as the Annuna, although several gods confined to the underworld are specifically designated Annuna, An's children. The Annuna are also said to live in Dulkug or Du-ku, the "holy mound".([Kramer](#) 1963: pp. 122-123, Black and Green p. 72, Kramer 1961, p. 73). In the "Descent of Inanna to the Nether World" the Anunnaki are identified as the seven judges of the nether world. (Kramer 1963 p. 154; Kramer 1961 p. 119)

Ereshkigal

Ereshkigal is the queen of the underworld, who is either given to [Kur](#) in the underworld or given dominion over the underworld in the prelude to "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Underworld". (Wolkstein and Kramer p. 157-158; Kramer 1961 p. 37-38) She has a palace there with seven gates and is due a visit by those entering Kur. (Kramer 1963 pp. 131, 134) She was married to [Gugalanna](#), the Bull of Heaven, and is [Inanna](#)'s older sister. When Inanna trespassed on her domain, Ereshkigal first directs her gatekeeper to open the seven gates a crack and remove her garments. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 55-57) Then when Inanna arrives she:

...fastened on Inanna the eye of death.
She spoke against her the word of wrath.
She uttered against her the cry of guilt

She struck her.

Inanna was turned into a corpse,
...And was hung from a hook on the wall. ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) 1983 p. 60)

Later, when [Enki](#)'s messengers arrive, she is moaning in pain. When they empathize with her, she grants them a boon. They request Inanna's corpse and she accedes. (Wolkstein & Kramer pp. 64-67) (See also [Babylonian Ereshkigal](#))

Nergal (Meslamtaea) -

Nergal is the second son of [Enlil](#) and [Ninlil](#). (Kramer 1961 pp. 44-45) He is perhaps the co-ruler of Kur with Ereshkigal where he has a palace and is due reverence by those who visit. He holds [Enkidu](#) fast in the underworld after Enkidu broke several taboos while trying to recover [Gilgamesh](#)'s *pukku* and *mikku*. He is more prominent in Babylonian literature and makes a brief appearance in II Kings 17:30. (See [Babylonian Nergal](#))

Ninlil

Ninlil was the intended bride of [Enlil](#) and the daughter of Nunbarshegunu, the old woman of Nippur. Enlil raped her and was then banished to the nether world (kur). She follows him to the nether world, where she gives birth to the moon god Sin (also known as [Nanna](#)). They have three more children in the nether world including Meslamtaea/[Nergal](#) and Ninazu who remain there so that Sin may be allowed to leave. ([Kramer](#), Sumerians 1963: pp.146-7; Kramer 1961 pp. 43-46). In some texts she is Enlil's sister while Ninhursag is his bride. (Jacobsen p.105) Her chief shrine was in the Tummal district of Nippur. (See also [Babylonian Ninlil](#))

Ningal

She is [Nanna](#)'s wife and the mother of [Inanna](#) and [Utu](#). She begs and weeps before [Enlil](#) for them not to flood her city, Ur. (see also [Babylonian Ningal](#) and [Nikkal](#) of the Canaanites.)

Nanshe

Nanshe is a goddess of the city of Lagash who takes care of orphans and widows. She also seeks out justice for the poor and casts judgement on New Year's Day. She is supported by [Nidaba](#) and her husband, Haia. (Kramer 1963 pp. 124-125)

Nidaba

The goddess of writing and the patron deity of the *edubba* (palace archives). She is an assistant to [Nanshe](#). (Kramer 1963 pp. 124-125)

Ninisinna (Nininsinna)

The patron goddess of the city Isin. She is the "hierodule of An"

Ninkasi ("The Lady who fills the mouth")

She is the goddess of brewing or alcohol, born of "sparkling-fresh water". (Kramer 1963 pp. 111, 206) She is one of the eight healing children born by [Ninhursag](#) for [Enki](#). She is born in response to Enki's mouth pain and Ninhursag declares that she should be the goddess who "sates the heart" (Kramer 1961 p. 58) or "who satisfies desire". (Kramer and Maier p. 30)

Ninurta

Ninurta is Enlil's son and a warrior deity, the god of the south wind. (Kramer 1963 p. 145; Kramer 1961 p. 80) In "The Feats and Exploits of Ninurta", that deity sets out to destroy the [Kur](#). Kur initially intimidates Ninurta into retreating, but when Ninurta returns with greater resolve, Kur is destroyed. This looses the waters of the Abzu, causing the fields to be flooded with unclean waters. Ninurta dams up the Abzu by piling stones over Kur's corpse. He then drains these waters into the Tigris. (Kramer 1961 pp. 80-82). The identification of Ninurta's

antagonist in this passage as Kur appears to be miscast. Black and Green identify his foe as the demon Asag, who was the spawn of An and Ki, and who produced monstrous offspring with Kur. The remainder of the details of this story are the same as in Kramer's account, but with Asag replacing Kur. In other versions, Ninurta is replaced by [Adad](#)/ [Ishkur](#). (Black & Green pp. 35-36)

(See also [the Babylonian Ninurta](#))

Ashnan

The kindly maid. Ashnan is a grain goddess, initially living in Dulkug (Du-ku). (Kramer 1961 p. 50) [Enlil](#) and [Enki](#), at Enki's urging, create farms and fields for her and for the cattle god [Lahar](#). This area has places for Lahar to take care of the animals and Ashnan to grow the crops. The two agricultural deities get drunk and begin fighting, so it falls to Enlil and Enki to resolve their conflict - how they do so has not been recovered. (Kramer 1961 pp. 53-54)

Lahar

Lahar is the cattle-goddess, initially living in Duku (Dulkug). [Enlil](#) and [Enki](#), at Enki's urging, create farms and fields for him and the grain goddess [Ashnan](#). This area has places for Lahar to take care of the animals and Ashnan to grow the crops. The two agricultural deities get drunk and begin fighting, so it falls to Enlil and Enki to resolve their conflict - how they do so has not been recovered. (Kramer 1961 pp. 53-54; Kramer 1963 pp. 220-223)

Emesh

Created by [Enlil](#) this god is responsible for agriculture. He quarrels with his brother Enten, and makes a claim to be the 'farmer of the gods', bringing his claim to Enlil after Enten. When Enlil judges Enten's claim to be stronger, Emesh relents, brings him gifts, and reconciles. (Kramer 1961 pp. 49-51)

Enten

He is a farmer god, and is [Enlil](#)'s field worker and herdsman. He quarrels with his brother Emesh and makes an appeal to Enlil that he deserves to be 'farmer of the gods'. Enlil judges Enten's claim to be the stronger and the two reconcile with Emesh bringing Enten gifts. (Kramer 1961 pp. 42, 49-51)

Uttu

She is the goddess of weaving and clothing (Kramer 1963 p. 174; Black and Green p. 182) and was previously thought to be the goddess of plants. She is both the child of Enki and Ninkur, and she bears eight new child/trees from Enki. When he then ate Uttu's children, Ninhursag cursed him with eight wounds and disappears. (Kramer 1961 pp. 57-59)

Enbilulu

The "knower" of rivers. He is the god appointed in charge of the Tigris and Euphrates by [Enki](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 61)

Ishkur

God appointed to be in charge of the winds by [Enki](#). He is in charge of "the silver lock of the 'heart' of heaven". (Kramer 1961 p. 61) He is identified with the Akkadian god, [Adad](#). (Black and Green pp. 35-36)

Enkimdu

God placed in charge of canals and ditches by [Enki](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 61)

Kabta

God placed in charge of the pickax and brickmold by [Enki](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 61)

Mushdamma

God placed in charge of foundations and houses by [Enki](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 61)

Sumugan

The god of the plain or "king of the mountain", he is the god placed in charge of the plant and animal life on the plain of Sumer by [Enki](#). (Kramer 1961 pp. 61-62; Kramer 1963 p. 220)

III. D. Demigods, mortal Heroes, and Monsters

Dumuzi (demigod) (Tammuz)

A shepherd, he is the son of [Enki](#) and Sirtur. (Wolkstein & Kramer p. 34) He is given charge of stables and sheepfolds, filled with milk and fat by [Enki](#). (Kramer 1961 p. 62) He has a palace in Kur, and is due a visit by those entering Kur. He is [Inanna](#)'s husband. In life, he was the shepherd king of Uruk.

"The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi"

[Utu](#) tries to set Inanna up with him but she initially rebuffs him, preferring the farmer. He assures her that his parents are as good as hers and she begins to desire him. The two consummate their relationship and with their exercise in fertility, the plants and grains grow as well. After they spend time in the marriage bed, Inanna declares herself as his battle leader and sets his duties as including sitting on the throne and guiding the path of weapons. At Ninshubur's request, she gives him power over the fertility of plants and animals. (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 30-50)

"Descent of Inanna to the Nether World"

Upon her rescue from the dead, he was pursued by galla demons, which he eluded for a time with the aid of [Utu](#). Eventually he was caught and slain; however, he was partially freed from his stay in the underworld by the actions of his sister [Geshtinanna](#). Now he resides there only half of the year, while she lives there the other half year; this represents seasonal change (see [Inanna](#) and [Geshtinanna](#)). (Wolkstein and Kramer pp. 71-89)
(See also the Babylonian [Tammuz](#).)

Geshtinanna (demigoddess)

She is Dumuzi's sister. After his death, she visited him in the underworld with Inanna, and was allowed to take his place there for six months out of the year. Her time in the underworld and her periodic emergence from it are linked with her new divine authority over the autumn vines and wine. (see also [Inanna](#), [Dumuzi](#))

Ziusudra (Ziusura)

In the Sumerian version of the flood story, the pious Ziusudra of Shuruppak (Kramer 1963 p. 26), the son of Ubartutu (or of Shuruppak?) (Kramer 1963 p. 224) is informed of the gods decision to destroy mankind by listening to a wall. He weathers the deluge and wind-storms aboard a huge boat. The only surviving detail of the boat is that it had a window. The flood lasts for seven days before [Utu](#) appears dispersing the flood waters. After that, Ziusudra makes appropriate sacrifices and prostrations to Utu, [An](#) and [Enlil](#). He is given eternal life in Dilmun by An and Enlil. (Kramer 1963 pp. 163-164; Kramer 1961 pp. 97-98)

Jacobsen reports a more complete version of "The Eridu Genesis" than Kramer or Black and Green which is close to the Babylonian story of [Atrahasis](#). In this account, man had been directed to live in cities by [Nintur](#) but as they thrived, the noise irritated Enlil, who thus started the flood. In this account, [Enki](#) warns Ziusudra, instructing him to build the boat for his family and for representatives of the animals. The remainder is consistent with the accounts of Kramer and Black and Green. (Jacobsen p. 114)

Gilgamesh (demigod)

The son, either of a nomad or of the hero-king Lugalbanda and of the goddess Ninsun, Gilgamesh, may have been a historical King of Erech, during the time of the first Ur dynasty. His kingship is mentioned in various places, including the Sumerian King list and he was also an *en*, a spiritual head of a temple. He was also the lord of Kulab and by one account, the brother of [Inanna](#). He was "the prince beloved of An", (Kramer p. 260, 188) and "who performs heroic deeds for Inanna" (Kramer 1963 p. 187)

"Gilgamesh and Agga" - (Pritchard pp.44-47; Kramer 1963 pp. 187-190)

King Agga of Kish sent an ultimatum to Erech. Gilgamesh tried to convince the elders that Erech should sack Kish in response, but the elders wanted to submit. He responded by taking the matter to the men of the city, who agreed to take up arms. Agga laid siege to Erech and Gilgamesh resisted with the help of his servant, [Enkidu](#). He sent a soldier through the gate to Agga. The soldier is captured and tortured with a brief respite while another of Gilgamesh's soldiers climbs over the wall. Gilgamesh himself then climbs the wall and Agga's forces are so taken aback by the sight of them that Agga capitulates. Gilgamesh graciously accepts Agga's surrender, praising him for returning his city.

After this episode, he apparently took Nippur from the son of the founder of the Ur I dynasty.

"Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living" (Pritchard pp. 47-50, Kramer 1963 pp. 190-197)

Gilgamesh, saddened by the dying he sees in his city, decides to go to the "Land of the Living" says so to Enkidu. At Enkidu's urging, Gilgamesh makes a sacrifice and first speaks to [Utu](#), who is in charge of that land. After he informs Utu of his motives, the god calls off his seven guardian weather heroes. Gilgamesh recruits fifty single men to accompany them and commissions swords and axes. They travel over seven mountains, felling trees along the way eventually finding the "cedar of his heart". After some broken text Gilgamesh is in a deep sleep, presumably after an encounter with [Huwawa](#). Enkidu or one of the others wakes him. They come upon Huwawa and Gilgamesh distracts him with flattery, then puts a nose ring on him and binds his arms. Huwawa grovels to Gilgamesh and Enkidu and Gilgamesh almost releases him. Enkidu argues against it and when Huwawa protests, he decapitates Huwawa. Gilgamesh is angered by Enkidu's rash action.

"Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld" (Kramer 1963 p.197-205)

Inanna appeals to Gilgamesh, here her brother, when her *huluppu* tree has been occupied and he is receptive. He tears down the tree and makes it into a throne and bed for her. In return for the favor, Inanna manufactures a *pukku* and *mikku* for him.

He leaves them out, goes to sleep and can't find them where he left them when he awakens. They had fallen into the underworld. Enkidu asks him what is wrong and Gilgamesh asks him to retrieve them, giving him instructions on how to behave in the underworld. Enkidu enters the "Great Dwelling" through a gate, but he broke several of the underworld taboos of which Gilgamesh warned, including the wearing of clean clothes and sandals, 'good' oil, carrying a weapon or staff, making a noise, or behaving normally towards one's family (Kramer 1963: pp. 132-133). For these violations he was "held fast by 'the outcry of the nether world'". Gilgamesh appeals to Enlil, who refuses to help. Intervention by [Enki](#), rescued the hero - or at least raised his shade for Gilgamesh to speak with.

"Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven"

He rejects Inanna's advances, so she sends the "[Bull of Heaven](#)" to ravage Erech in retribution. (Kramer 1963 p. 262)

"Death of Gilgamesh" (Pritchard pp. 50-52, Kramer 1963 pp. 130-131)

Gilgamesh is fated by Enlil to die but also to be unmatched as a warrior. When he dies, his wife and household servants make offerings (of themselves?) for Gilgamesh to the deities of the underworld.

He is given a palace in the nether world and venerated as lesser god of the dead. It is respectful to pay him a visit upon arrival. If he knew you in life or is of your kin he may explain the rules of Kur to you - which he helps to regulate.

His son and successor was either Ur-lugal or Urnungal.
(see [Babylonian Gilgamesh](#))

Enkidu

[Gilgamesh](#)'s servant and friend. He assists Gilgamesh in putting back Agga's siege of Erech.

He accompanies Gilgamesh and his soldiers on the trip to the "Land of the Living". Probably after an initial encounter with [Huwawa](#), Gilgamesh falls asleep and Enkidu awakens him. They come upon Huwawa and Gilgamesh distracts him with flattery, then puts a nose ring on him and binds his arms. Huwawa grovels to Gilgamesh and Enkidu and Gilgamesh almost releases him. Enkidu argues against it and when Huwawa protests, he decapitates Huwawa. Gilgamesh is angered by Enkidu's rash action.

The main body of the Gilgamesh tale includes a trip to the nether-world. Enkidu enters the "Great Dwelling" through a gate, in order to recover Gilgamesh's *pukku* and *mikku*, objects of an uncertain nature. He broke several taboos of the underworld, including the wearing of clean clothes and sandals, 'good' oil, carrying a weapon or staff, making a noise, or behaving normally towards one's family (Kramer 1963: pp. 132-133). For these violations he was "held fast by 'the outcry of the nether world'". Intervention by [Enki](#), rescued the hero or at least raised his shade for Gilgamesh to speak with.

Kur

Kur literally means "mountain", "foreign land", or "land" and came to be identified both with the underworld and, more specifically, the area which either was contained by or contained the Abzu. (Kramer 1961 p. 76) In the prelude to "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Underworld, [Ereshkigal](#) was carried off into the Kur as its prize at about the same time as [An](#) and [Enlil](#) carried off the heaven and the earth. Later in that same passage, [Enki](#) also struggled with Kur and presumably was victorious, thereby able to claim the title "Lord of Kur" (the realm). Kramer suggests that Kur was a dragon-like creature, calling to mind Tiamat and Leviathan. The text suggests that Enki's struggle may have been with instruments of the land of kur - its stones or its creatures hurling stones. (Kramer 1961 p. 37-38, 78-79) (See also [Apsu](#) and [Tiamat](#).)

In "The Feats and Exploits of [Ninurta](#)", that deity sets out to destroy the Kur. Kur initially intimidates Ninurta into retreating, but when Ninurta returns with greater resolve, Kur is destroyed. This looses the waters of the Abzu, causing the fields to be flooded with unclean waters. Ninurta dams up the Abzu by piling stones over Kur's corpse. He then drains these waters into the Tigris. (Kramer 1961 pp. 80-82). The identification of Ninurta's antagonist in this passage as Kur appears to be miscast. Black and Green identify his foe as the demon Asag, who was the spawn of An and Ki, and who produced monstrous offspring with Kur. The remainder of the details of this story are the same as in Kramer's account, but with Asag

replacing Kur. In other versions, Ninurta is replaced by [Adad](#)/ [Ishkur](#). (Black & Green pp. 35-36)

"Inanna and Mt. Ebih": Inanna is also described in Hymns as a destroyer of Kur. If one, as Kramer does, identifies Kur with Mt. Ebih, then we learn that it has directed fear against the gods, the Anunnaki and the land, sending forth rays of fire against the land. Inanna declares to An that she will attack Mt. Ebih unless it submits. An warns against such an attack, but Inanna proceeds anyway and destroys it. (Kramer 1961 pp. 82-83).

Gugalanna (Gugal-ana)

He is [Ereshkigal](#)'s husband, and according to Kramer, the Bull of Heaven. (Wolkstein and Kramer p. 55) Black and Green tentatively identify him with Ennugi, god of canals and dikes, rather than the Bull of Heaven. (Black and Green p. 77) After Gilgamesh spurned Inanna, she sends the Bull of Heaven to terrorize Erech. (Kramer 1963 p. 262)

Huwawa

Guardian of the cedar of the heart in the the "Land of the living", Huwawa has dragon's teeth, a lion's face, a roar like rushing flood water, huge clawed feet and a thick mane. He lived there in a cedar house. He appears to have attacked Gilgamesh, Enkidu and company when they felled that cedar. They then come upon Huwawa and Gilgamesh distracts him with flattery, then puts a nose ring on him and binds his arms. Huwawa grovels to Gilgamesh and Enkidu and Gilgamesh almost releases him. Enkidu argues against it and when Huwawa protests, he decapitates Huwawa. See also the [Babylonian Humbaba](#)

Gods in Kur with palaces who are due reverence:

Namtar - "Fate", the demon responsible for death. Namtar has no hands or feet and does not eat or drink. (Pritchard p. 51)

Hubishag

Ningishzida - the god of dawn

Dimpemekug - due gifts, no palace

Neti - the chief gatekeeper

the scribe of Kur - due gifts, no palace

The Sumerians had many other deities as well, most of which appear to have been minor.

IV. What about the Underworld?

The underworld of the Sumerians is revealed, to some extent, by a composition about the death and afterlife of the king and warlord Ur-Nammu. After having died on the battlefield, Ur-Nammu arrives below, where he offers sundry gifts and sacrifices to the "seven gods" of the nether world:

... [Nergal](#), [the deified] [Gilgamesh](#), [Ereshkigal](#) [the queen of the underworld, who is either given to Kur in the underworld or given dominion over the underworld in the prelude to Gilgamesh (Kramer & Maier 1989: p. 83) (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983: p. 4)] , [Dumuzi](#) [the shepherd, Inanna's husband], Namtar, Hubishag, and Ningishzida - each in his own palace; he also presented gifts to Dimpemekug and to the "scribe of the nether- world."... [After arriving at his assigned spot] ...certain of the dead were turned over to him, perhaps to be

his attendants, and Gilgamesh, his beloved brother, explained to him the rules and regulations of the nether world. ([Kramer](#) 1963: p. 131)

Another tablet indicates that the sun, moon, and their respective gods, spent time in the underworld as well. The sun journeyed there after setting, and the moon rested there at the end of the month. Both [Utu](#) and [Nanna](#) "'decreed the fate' of the dead" while there. ([Kramer](#) 1963: p. 132) Dead heroes ate bread, drank, and quenched the dead's thirst with water. The gods of the nether world, the deceased, and his city, were prayed to for the benefit of the dead and his family.

The Sumerian version of Gilgamesh includes a trip to the nether world as well. In the prologue, [Enki](#) sails for the Kur, presumably to rescue [Ereshkigal](#) after she was given over to [Kur](#). He is assailed by creatures with stones. The main body of the tale includes a trip to the nether world as well. [Enkidu](#) enters the "Great Dwelling" through a gate, in order to recover Gilgamesh's pukku and mikku, objects of an uncertain nature. He broke several taboos of the underworld, including the wearing of clean clothes and sandals, 'good' oil, carrying a weapon or staff, making a noise, or behaving normally towards ones family ([Kramer](#) 1963: pp. 132-133). For these violations he was "held fast by 'the outcry of the nether world'". Intervention by Enki, rescued the hero.

When Enlil visits the nether world, he must pass by a gatekeeper, followed by a "man of the river" and a "man of the boat" - all of whom act as guardians. ([Kramer](#) 1961 pp. 45-47)

[Inanna](#) also visits Kur, which results in a myth reminiscent of the Greek seasonal story of Persephone. She sets out to witness the funeral rites of her sister-in-law [Ereshkigal](#)'s husband [Gugalanna](#), the Bull of Heaven. She takes precaution before setting out, by telling her servant Ninshubur to seek assistance from [Enlil](#), [Nanna](#), or [Enki](#) at their shrines, should she not return. Inanna knocks on the outer gates of Kur and the gatekeeper, Neti, questions her. He consults with queen Ereshkigal and then allows Inanna to pass through the seven gates of the underworld. After each gate, she is required to remove adornments and articles of clothing, until after the seventh gate, she is naked. The Annuna pass judgment against her and Ereshkigal slays her and hangs her on the wall ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) 1983 p. 60)

[Inanna](#) is rescued by the intervention of [Enki](#). He creates two sexless creatures that empathize with [Ereshkigal](#)'s suffering, and thereby gain a gift - Inanna's corpse. They restore her to life with the Bread of Life and the Water of Life, but the Sumerian underworld has a conservation of death law. No one can leave without providing someone to stay in their stead. Inanna is escorted by galla/demons past Ninshubur and members of her family. She doesn't allow them to claim anyone until she sees [Dumuzi](#) on his throne in Uruk. They then seize Dumuzi, but he escapes them twice by transforming himself, with the aid of [Utu](#). Eventually he is caught and slain. Inanna spies his sister, [Geshtinanna](#), in mourning and they go to Dumuzi. She allows Dumuzi, the shepherd, to stay in the underworld only six months of the year, while Geshtinanna will stay the other six. ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) pp. 60-89) As with the Greek story of the kidnapping of Persephone, this linked the changing seasons, the emergence of the plants from the ground, with the return of a harvest deity from the nether world. Although he had always been a shepherd (and possibly a mortal king) he was blessed with the powers of fertility following the consummation of his marriage to Inanna in "The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi".

As the farmer, let him make the fields fertile,
As the shepherd, let him make the sheepfolds multiply,
Under his reign let there be vegetation,
Under his reign let there be rich grain ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) p. 45)

Geshtinanna is also associated with growth, but where her brother rules over the spring harvested grain, she rules over the autumn harvested vines ([Wolkstein & Kramer](#) p. 168)

V. What are *me* anyway?

Another important concept in Sumerian theology, was that of *me*. The *me* were universal decrees of divine authority. They are the invocations that spread arts, crafts, and civilization. The *me* were assembled by [Enlil](#) in Ekur and given to [Enki](#) to guard and impart to the world, beginning with Eridu, his center of worship. From there, he guards the *me* and imparts them on the people. He directs the *me* towards Ur and Meluhha and Dilmun, organizing the world with his decrees. Later, [Inanna](#) comes to Enki and complains at having been given too little power from his decrees. In a different text, she gets Enki drunk and he grants her more powers, arts, crafts, and attributes - a total of ninety-four *me*. Inanna parts company with Enki to deliver the *me* to her cult center at Erech. Enki recovers his wits and tries to recover the *me* from her, but she arrives safely in Erech with them. ([Kramer & Maier](#) 1989: pp. 38-68)

VI. I've heard that there are a lot of Biblical parallels in Sumerian literature. What are they?

Traces of Sumerian religion survive today and are reflected in writings of the Bible. As late as Ezekiel, there is mention of a Sumerian deity. In Ezekiel 8:14, the prophet sees women of Israel weeping for [Tammuz](#) ([Dumuzi](#)) during a drought.

The bulk of Sumerian parallels can, however be found much earlier, in the book of Genesis. As in Genesis, the Sumerians' world is formed out of the watery abyss and the heavens and earth are divinely separated from one another by a solid dome. The second chapter of Genesis introduces the paradise Eden, a place which is similar to the Sumerian Dilmun, described in the myth of "[Enki](#) and [Ninhursag](#)". Dilmun is a pure, bright, and holy land - now often identified with Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. It is blessed by Enki to have overflowing, sweet water. Enki fills it with lagoons and palm trees. He impregnates Ninhursag and causes eight new plants to grow from the earth. Eden, "in the East" (Gen. 2:8) has a river which also "rises" or overflows, to form four rivers including the Tigris and Euphrates. It too is lush and has fruit bearing trees. (Gen. 2:9-10) In the second version of the creation of man "The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being." Enki and Ninmah (Ninhursag) use a similar method in creating man. [Nammu](#), queen of the abyss and Enki's mother, bids Enki to "Knead the 'heart' of the clay that is over the Abzu " and "give it form" ([Kramer & Maier](#) p. 33) From there the similarities cease as the two create several malformed humans and then the two deities get into an argument.

Returning to [Enki](#) and [Ninhursag](#), we find a possible parallel to the creation of Eve. Enki consumed the plants that were Ninhursag's children and so was cursed by Ninhursag, receiving one wound for each plant consumed. [Enlil](#) and a fox act on Enki's behalf to call back Ninhursag in order to undo the damage. She joins with him again and bears eight new children, each of whom are the cure to one of his wounds. The one who cures his rib is named Ninti, whose name means the Queen of months, ([Kramer & Maier](#) 1989: pp. 28-30) the lady of the rib, or she who makes live. This association carries over to Eve. ([Kramer](#), History Begins at Sumer 1981: pp. 143-144) In Genesis, Eve is fashioned from Adam's rib and her name hawwa is related to the Hebrew word hay or living. ([New American Bible](#) p. 7.) The prologue of "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Underworld" may contain the predecessor to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree not only contains a crafty serpent,

but also Lilith, the legendary first wife of Adam. The huluppu tree is transplanted by [Inanna](#) from the banks of the Euphrates to her garden in Uruk, where she finds that:

...a serpent who could not be charmed
made its nest in the roots of the tree,
The [Anzu](#) bird set his young in the branches of the tree,
And the dark maid Lilith built her home in the trunk. ([Wolkstein and Kramer](#) 1983: p. 8)

It should be noted that Kramer's interpretation that this creature is Lilith has come into question of late. See http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~hummm/Topics/Lilith/relief_question.html#KRAEMERCRT.

The connection between this relief and Lilith has been seriously questioned in some recent scholarship. The following comes from the entry on Lilith in the Anchor Bible Dictionary (Lowell K. Handy):

Two sources of information previously used to define Lilith are both suspect. Kramer translated ki-sikil-lil-la-ke4 as "Lilith" in a Sumerian *Gilgamesh* fragment. The text relates an incident where this female takes up lodging in a tree trunk which has a Zu-bird perched in the branches and a snake living in the roots. This text was used to interpret a sculpture of a woman with bird talons for feet as being a depiction of Lilith. From the beginning this interpretation was questioned so that after some debate neither the female in the story, nor the figure are assumed to be Lilith. (Vol. 4, p. 324)
-- *Alan Humm*

Another possible Sumerian carry-over related to the Fall of man is the lack of "pangs of childbearing" for those in Dilmun. In particular, [Ninhursag](#) gives birth in nine days, not nine months, and the pass "like good princely cream" ([Kramer](#) 1981: p. 142,145) or "fine oil" ([Kramer & Maier](#) 1989: p. 25)

The quarrels between herder god and farmer deity pairs such as [Lahar](#) and [Ashnan](#) or [Enten](#) and [Emesh](#) are similar in some respects to the quarrels of Cain and Abel. In the Sumerian versions death appears to be avoided, although we do not have the complete Lahar and Ashnan story. (Kramer 1961 pp. 49-51, 53-54)

The ten patriarchs in Genesis born prior to the flood lived very long lives, most in excess of 900 years. The seventh patriarch, Enoch, lived *only* 365 years before he "walked with God". (Genesis 5). The account which numbers those Patriarchs as ten is attributed to the Priestly source. The Yahwist source (J), details only seven Patriarchs prior to Noah, so that with him included, there are eight antediluvian patriarchs. (Genesis 4: 17-18) The eight antediluvian kings of in the Sumerian King List also lived for hundreds of years. (Kramer 1963 p. 328) S. H. Hooke notes another version of the Sumerian King list, found in Larsa details ten antediluvian kings. (Hooke, p. 130) The clearest Biblical parallel comes from the story of the Flood. In the Sumerian version, the pious Ziusudra is informed of the gods decision to destroy mankind by listening to a wall. He too weathers the deluge aboard a huge boat. Noah's flood lasts a long time, but Ziusudra comes to rest within seven days and not the near year of the Bible. He does not receive a covenant, but is given eternal life. (Kramer 1963 pp. 163-164; Kramer 1961 pp. 97-98)

As far as the New Testament goes, many also draw a parallel between [Dumuzi](#) and Jesus because Dumuzi is a shepherd-king and he is resurrected from the dead. This is perhaps appealing to some as Dumuzi's Akkadian analog, Tammuz, appears in the Bible, however Dumuzi's periodic return from

the underworld is not unique even in Sumerian literature. His sister [Geshtinanna](#) also rises from the dead, and if one counts those born as deities, [Inanna](#) does as well. Periodic death and rebirth is a common theme in agricultural myths where the return of the deities from the earth mirrors a return to life of plants.

VII. Sources

- Black, Jeremy and Green, Anthony, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1992. This up-to-date and thorough resource on Mesopotamian mythology has great photos and illustrations by Tessa Rickards and very useful entries which often indicate the times and places when variant tales were current. My only complaint is that it is not always clear whether information in an entry is applicable to the Sumerian, Akkadian, or both versions of a particular deity or hero.
- Crawford, Harriet, *Sumer and the Sumerians*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991. (This is a briefer but more up to date archaeological look at the Sumerians than you'll find with Kramer. There isn't much mythic content in this one, but there are many wonderful figures detailing city plans, and the structure of temples and other buildings.)
- Jacobsen, Thorkild, *The Treasures of Darkness*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976. A good alternative to Kramer, Jacobsen explores Mesopotamian religious development from early Sumerian times through the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*. Most of the book winds up being on the Sumerians.
- Kramer, Samuel Noah, and Maier, John, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989. The most recent work that I've been able to find by Kramer. They translate and analyze all of the available myths which include Enki. I've only seen it available in hardcover and I haven't seen it in a bookstore yet.
- Kramer, Samuel Noah, *Sumerian Mythology*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1961. This slim volume contains much of the mythological material that wound up in *The Sumerians* but concentrated in one spot and without much cultural or historical detail. Many of the myths are more developed here, some of which are only glossed over in *The Sumerians*, however in some cases *The Sumerians* holds the more complete or updated myth.
- Kramer, Samuel Noah *The Sumerians* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963. (This is a more thorough work than Kramer's Section at the end of *Inanna*, but the intervening 20 or so years of additional research and translation allow *Inanna*'s section to be perhaps more complete, regarding mythology.)
- Wolkstein, Diane and Kramer, Samuel Noah, *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth*, Harper & Row, NY, 1983. (Ms. Wolkstein's verse translations of the Inanna/Dumuzi cycle of myths are excellent, but differ somewhat from Kramer's originals. Kramer gives a 30 or so page description of Sumerian cosmology and society at the end).
- *The New American Bible*, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1970.

VIII. Other books of interest

- Algaze, Guillermo, "The Uruk Expansion", *Current Anthropology*, Dec. 1989. This article helped with the introduction material.
- Hooke, S. H. *Middle Eastern Mythology*, Penguin Books, New York, 1963. This work covers Sumerian, Babylonian, Canaanite/Ugaritic, Hittite, and Hebrew mythologic material in brief and with comparisons.
- Fagan, B. M., *People of the Earth*, Glenview IL, Scott Forsman, 1989. This archaeology text book helped provide some of the introductory material.

- Kramer, Samuel Noah, *History Begins at Sumer*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1981. (This text runs through a bunch of "firsts" that Kramer attributes to the Sumerians. I only looked at it briefly, but it seemed to contain about the same information as was in *The Sumerians* only in a "Wow neat!" format instead of something more coherent.)
 - Pritchard J. B., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton, 1955. There is also a 1969 edition of this work and a companion volume of pictures. It seems to be the authoritative source for all complete texts of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Canaanites, Hittites, and perhaps other groups as well. It's pricy but many libraries have a copy.
 - Stephenson, Neal, *Snowcrash*, Bantam Books, New York, 1992. Cyberpunk meets "Inanna, Enki, and the *Me*".
 - Wooley, C. Leonard, *Excavations at Ur*, 1954. This is one of the earlier works on the subject, and as such is not as complete as the others although it is of historical interest.
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The Assyro-Babylonian Mythology FAQ

version 1.9.html

By Christopher B. Siren (Nov. 1994)

Last revised (October, 2003)

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- [VI.](#) So, in AD&D, Tiamat is this five-headed evil dragon, but they got her from the *Enuma Elish*, right? What about her counterpart, Bahamut?
- [VII.](#) I've heard there are Biblical parallels in Babylonian literature. What are they anyway?
- [VIII.](#) Where did you get this info and where can I find out more?

I. Overview (including regional history)

First, some definitions: Mesopotamia, in general, refers to the area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Assyria, was the northern portion of Mesopotamia, who's capital was Ashur (until 883 BCE, when it was moved to Calah/Nimrud) and whose reach included the major city of Nineveh (Ninua). Sumer refers to the southern delta region, whose primary cities included Ur, Uruk, and Eridu. Akkad was a region north of Sumer which included the area around modern Baghdad as well as the ancient sites of Babylon, Kish, and Nippur.

The political organization of the region was basically a collection of city-states. **Sargon of Agade** (2371-16 BCE) united the regions of Sumer and Akkad. His descendants eventually lost control of the empire due to pressures from the Hurrians, the Hittites, and other invaders, not to mention internal pressures. In the south Sumer again gained ascendancy, dominated by the city-state Ur. Sumer then collapsed under the Amorites around 2000 BCE. They established many sub- kingdoms including Assyria and Babylon.

Assyria attained a brief period of dominance under Shamshi-Adad (1813-1781 BCE) but was soon superseded by Babylon under Hammurapi (Hammurabi) (1792-50 BCE) who established what once were thought to be the first written law codes (more recent discoveries include law codes from a couple centuries prior to Hammurapi). The first Babylonian dynasty had begun in 1894 BCE, coinciding with the **Old Babylonian** period of literature. It collapsed in 1595 BCE when the Hittites sacked its eponymous capital.

Assyria had been taken over by the Mitanni (a Hurrian speaking kingdom) but established its independence in the mid 14th century BCE. Under Tukulti-Ninurta I Assyria dominated the entire fertile crescent in the late 13th century. By the time of Tiglath-Pileser I, about a century later it had directed more of its attention westwards towards the Levant in the West and lost control of Babylon and the south. Slowly Assyria began to expand again, reaching its apex between 750 and 650 BCE under the rulers Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE). The empire collapsed from invaders with Nineveh falling to Nabopolassar of Babylon in 612 BCE and the empire dying in 605 BCE.

Meanwhile, Babylon had been reasserting itself. Nabopolassar had begun the Chaldean dynasty during his rule beginning in 625 BCE. This period is also known as the **Neo-Babylonian** period although that term also describes the language of that era. Under Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar II, Babylon expanded westward, taking Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Babylon fell in the mid-540's to Cyrus the Persian whose empire lasted until the late 300's BCE when Alexander of Macedon established his empire and renamed the area "Mesopotamia".

II. So these guys were just like the Sumerian Deities right?

Well some of them were mostly like the Sumerian Deities, but as you might expect, they have their own kinks and differences. In general the following relationships apply:

This is not a cut and dry relation. Sumerian and Babylonian names appear in the same Babylonian document, sometimes referring to the same entity. In addition, there are numerous local variations of these deities names which, in the next section, such 'optional' names appear in parentheses after the more prevalent name.

III. Who were the gods and the heroes of the Babylonians then?

A. The Older (genealogically) Gods:

Apsu

"The Epic of Creation (*Enuma Elish*): Tablet I"

He is the underworld ocean, the begetter of the skies ([Anshar](#)) and the earth ([Kishar](#)) and the father of [Lahmu](#) and [Lahamu](#). He could not quell the noise of them or of their children, so he colluded with his vizier [Mummu](#) to silence the gods and allow his mate [Tiamat](#) to rest, after Tiamat herself rejected the idea. [Ea](#) found out about his plans, cast a sleeping spell on him and killed him.

(Dalley pp. 232-235, 318)

Tiamat

"The Epic of Creation (*Enuma Elish*): Tablets I-III"

She is primeval Chaos, bearer of the skies ([Anshar](#)) and the earth ([Kishar](#)) and the mother of [Lahmu](#), and [Lahamu](#). Traditionally conceived of as a serpent or dragon of some sort, this idea does not have any basis in the *Enuma Elish* itself. Within that work her physical description includes, a tail, a thigh, "lower parts" (which shake together), a belly, an udder, ribs, a neck, a head, a skull, eyes, nostrils, a mouth, and lips. She has insides, a heart, arteries, and blood. The clamor of the younger gods disturbed her, but she continued to indulge them.

When her mate [Apsu](#) and his vizier [Mummu](#) suggested that they kill the younger gods, she grew furious, then calmed down and rejected the plan. Her restless subservient gods goaded her into action after Apsu is slain. They prepared to wage war against the other gods. As *Mother Hubur*, (the underworld river, who fashions all things), she bore giant snakes with venom for blood, and cloaked dragons with a godlike radiance yet with a terrible visage, for the war. She rallied a horned serpent, a mushussu-dragon, a lahmu-hero, a ugallu-demon, a rabid dog, a scorpion-man, umu-demons, a fish-man, a bull-man, and eleven others underneath her champion and new lover, [Qingu](#). She gave Qingu the *Tablet of Destinies* to facilitate his command and attack. (Dalley pp. 231-249)

"The Epic of Creation (*Enuma Elish*): Tablets IV-V"

[Marduk](#) came with his host to attack her. Qingu's strategy initially confused him, and Tiamat tried to enspell him, hurling jibes at him. She was rebuffed and incited into single combat with Marduk. She continued to cast her spell and Marduk netted her, and threw a wind at her. She tried to swallow it and was undone - distended, shot, sliced in two and cut in the heart. Her crushed skull heralded her death, and half of her body was used to roof up the sky. Her eyes became the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. (Dalley pp. 249-257)

Lahmu and Lahamu

'the hairy one' or 'muddy' they have three pairs of curls, and are naked except for a triple sash. Dalley (p. 324)

"The Epic of Creation (*Enuma Elish*)>: Tablets I-III"

They were the first children of [Tiamat](#) and [Apsu](#). [Kappa](#) was sent to fetch them by [Anshar](#), to help send off [Marduk](#) on his fight with Tiamat and be rallied to his side. They complied and helped find a princely shrine for Marduk. (Dalley pp. 232, 244-249)

Anshar

- 'whole sky' He is the father of [Anu](#) and the child of [Tiamat](#) and [Apsu](#). He is often paired with [Kishara](#), and his qualities were assimilated with [Ashur](#). When [Ea](#) learned of Tiamat's planned war, Anshar tried to stir him into attacking her first, but was rebuffed. He turned to Anu and sent him on a peace mission to Tiamat, but Anu returned unsuccessful. An assembly was convened and [Marduk](#) came forth at Ea's urging, promising to deliver Tiamat's defeated body to Anshar's feet. He required of the assembly a promise that he would be given the leadership of the pantheon after he is victorious. He had [Kappa](#) gather [Lahmu](#), [Lahamu](#), and the other gods together to send off Marduk on his fight and rally them to his side. When they arrive they help find a princely shrine for Marduk.

Kishar

- 'whole earth' , She is the mother of [Anu](#) and the child of [Tiamat](#) and [Apsu](#).

Anu

- Sumerian for "heaven", a sky god, father and king of the gods. He is the son of [Anshar](#) and [Kishar](#). He lives in the third heaven. The Eanna in Uruk was dedicated both to him and consort. His first consort was Antu. They produced the Anunnaki - the underworld gods, and the utukki - the seven evil demons. His second consort was Innina ([Ishtar](#)). He is a god of monarchs and is not friendly to the common people. He is a "King of the Igigi". He is assigned the sky as his domain in 'Atrahasis'. His 'kishru's (shooting stars) have awesome strength. He has the ability that anything he puts into words, becomes reality. He is Niudimmud's ([Ea](#)'s) father.

When [Anzu](#) stole the Tablet of Destinies from [Ellil](#), he called for one of the gods to slay Anzu and thereby greatly increase his reputation.

He gave [Marduk](#) the four winds to play with. He made a whirlwind and a flood wave and stirred up [Tiamat](#) on purpose. When Tiamat's retaliation for [Apsu](#)'s death was discovered, Anshar sent him on a peace mission to her, but he returned unsuccessfully. He helps form a princely shrine for Marduk prior to his battle with Tiamat, and gives him the Anu-power of decreeing fates, such that his word is law.

He calls [Adapa](#) to account for breaking the wing of the South Wind, and offers him the food and drink of eternal life after [Dumuzi](#) and Gizzida speak on Adapa's behalf.

He and [Earth](#) father the Sebitti. He gives them fearsome fates and powers and puts them at [Erra](#)'s command, to aid in killing noisy, over-populous people and animals.

He agrees to send the Bull of Heaven after [Gilgamesh](#) on Ishtar's behalf, if she has made sure that the people of Uruk are properly provisioned for seven years. He decrees that either Gilgamesh or [Enkidu](#) must die for the slaying of Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven. He sends [Kakka](#) to Kurnugi to tell [Ereshkigal](#) to send a messenger to receive a gift from him. (See also the Sumerian [An](#) and the Hittite [Anus](#))

Symbol: sacred shine surmounted by the divine horned cap.

Sacred number: 60

Astrological region: heavenly equator

Sacred animal: the heavenly Bull

Antu(m)

- Sumerian for "the earth", she is a colorless being who was the first consort of [Anu](#). They produced the Anunnaki - the underworld gods, and the utukki - the seven evil demons. She was replaced by [Isthar](#) ([Inanna](#)) who is sometimes her daughter.

Aruru (Ninmah, Nintu, [Ninhursaga](#), Belet-ili, Mami)

-She is the mother goddess and was responsible for the creation of man with the help of [Enlil](#) or [Enki](#). She is also called the womb goddess, and midwife of the gods. Acting on [Ea](#)'s advice and direction, she mixed clay with the blood of the god [Geshtu-e](#), in order to shape and birth seven men and seven women. These people would bear the workload of the Igigi. She also added to the creation of [Gilgamesh](#), and, at [Anu](#)'s command, made [Enkidu](#) in Anu's image by pinching off a piece of clay, throwing it into the wilderness, and birthing him there. Ea called her to offer her beloved [Ninurta](#) as the one who should hunt [Anzu](#). She does so. (See also the Hittite [Hannahannas](#))

Mammetum

- the maker or mother of fate.

Nammu

- one of "the pure goddesses", [Ea](#)'s mother, associated with fresh water.

B. The Anunnaki, Igigi, and the Younger Gods

Ellil ([Enlil](#)) - Sumerian for "wind/storm-god".

Initially the leader of the pantheon, he has since relinquished his spot to [Anu](#). Possible slayer of [Enmesharra](#) and avenger of his father Anu. His role in this was upplanted by [Marduk](#) by the Babylonians. He is a short-tempered god who was responsible for the great flood. He is the creator of mankind. He is thought to favor and help those in need. He guards the "tablets of destiny", which allow him to determine the fate of all things animate or inanimate. They were once stolen from him by a Zu, a storm-bird (a bird with some human qualities). They were recovered and Zu faced judgment by Ellil. His consort is [Ninlil](#), his chief-minister is [Nusku](#). He was also god of the lands and of the earth. He is a "King of the Anunnaki". He was their counselor-warrior. He and his people receive the earth in 'Atrahasis'. His temple is Duranki.

When the Igigi rebelled against him, and surrounded his house and called for Anu. After man was created in response to the Igigi's grievances, he grew weary of their noise and released several disasters upon them, after each one, man recovered and then he released a new one. The disasters included disease, flood, drought, and the great flood. He appointed [Humbaba](#) to guard the cedar forest and terrify mankind. He decreed that [Enkidu](#) must die for the slaying of the Bull of Heaven and Humbaba. He does not answer [Gilgamesh](#)'s plea to restore Enkidu to life. He found a throne for [Etana](#) to rule from in Kish. He appointed [Anzu](#) as the guardian of his bath chamber, but while bathing, Anzu stole from him the Tablet of Destinies, and his Ellil-power. [Ninurta](#), with [Ea](#)'s advice and [Belet-ili](#)'s urgings slew Anzu and recovered the Tablet of Destinies. (See also the Hittite [Ellil](#))

Symbol: Seven small circles representing the Pleiades.

Sacred number: 50

Astrological region: north of "the way of Anu" ie. 12 degrees north of the equator.

Ea ([Enki](#), Nudimmud)

- god of the waters. He is in charge of the bolt which bars the sea. He knows everything. He is the "Lord of Wisdom" and "Lord of Incantations". When he speaks, of a thing, it will be made. He is the son of [Anu](#), but sometimes he is the son of [Anshar](#). [Dumkina](#) is his consort. He created [Zaltu](#) as a complement to [Ishtar](#). He discovered the plot of [Apsu](#) and [Mummu](#), put Apsu under a sleeping spell, and slew him and put Mummu into a daze, tied him up, and slew him. He then named his quarters Apsu, the underworld ocean that supports the world. He and Damkina produced [Bel](#) and [Marduk](#). (Bel is likely to be another name for Marduk.)

He learned that [Tiamat](#) was planning a war of revenge against the gods. His father Anshar tries to spur him into making the first attack against Tiamat, but Ea rebuffs him. When Anu's peace mission fails, he urges Marduk into action.

He suggests the method of creating man, in response to the heavy workload of the Igigi. As mankind's patron, he is the instructor of all crafts, writing, building, farming, and magic. He advises mankind when other gods would do them harm. He granted [Adapa](#) understanding, to teach mankind. When Adapa used this knowledge to break the wing of the South Wind, he cursed him and told him to complain of [Dumuzi](#) and [Gizzida](#)'s absence to Anu. While in Anu's court, he advises Adapa not to eat the bread of eternal life (lest he forfeit his life on earth). He refuses to flood mankind for [Ellil](#). Eventually he accedes, but only after advising [Atrahasis](#) to build a boat in which to weather the flood.

He tells [Nergal](#) to allow [Enkidu](#)'s spirit to visit with [Gilgamesh](#). When Ea is informed of [Ishtar](#)'s imprisonment in the Underworld, he creates 'His appearance is bright' to stand at [Ereshkigal](#)'s gate and mellow her mood and have her swear an oath by the great gods. He instructs Nergal on

how to build the gift throne for Ereshkigal, and hides him with spring water to hide him from [Namtar](#) after he returned from the underworld.

When Anu and the gods could not locate a volunteer to kill [Anzu](#), he told the Igiggi that he would pick one. He instructs [Belet-ili](#)/ [Mami](#) to send [Ninurta](#) to slay Anzu and, through [Sharur](#) advises Ninurta on how to defeat the creature. (See also the Canaanite Heyan aka [Kothar-u-Khasis](#) and the Hittite [Ayas](#))

Symbol: Ram's head; goat-fish (a goat's head on a fish's body)

Sacred number: 40

Astrological region: 12 degrees south in the sky (includes Pisces and Aquarius)

Mummu

- the craftsman god. He is attendant to [Ea](#) and [Apsu](#)'s vizier. He is very fond of Apsu and colludes with him to disperse the younger gods when they disturb [Tiamat](#), even after Tiamat rejects the plan. Ea found out about his plan, enspelled him and tied him up.

Qingu (older spelling - Kingu)

- [Tiamat](#)'s battle leader and second husband/lover after [Apsu](#). He is promoted and enhanced to a leading position from among the ranks. Tiamat places the Tablet of Destinies in his possession, giving him the [Anu](#)-power, such that his word is law and affects reality. He gives his army fire-quenching breath and paralyzing venom. His battle strategy initially confuses [Marduk](#). He is defeated by Marduk and counted among the dead gods. For his part in the war he was made by Marduk to provide the blood for the creation of man - filling the role that [Geshtu-e](#) takes in other versions of the creation of man story.

Sin ([Nannar](#))

- moon god, son of [Enlil](#). He has a beard of Lapis Lazuli and rides a winged bull. His consort is [Ningal](#). He is the father of [Shamash](#). He does not answer [Gilgamesh](#)'s plea to restore [Enkidu](#) to life.

Symbol: Crescent

Sacred number: 30

Sphere of influence: the moon, calendars, vegetation, cattle fertility

Ningal

- the consort of [Sin](#), the mother of [Shamash](#)

Ishtar (Ishhara, Irnini, [Inanna](#))

She is [Anu](#)'s second consort, daughter of [Anu](#) and Antum, (sometimes daughter of [Sin](#)), and sometimes the sister of [Ereshkigal](#). She is the goddess of love, procreation, and war. She is armed with a quiver and bow. Her temples have special prostitutes of both genders. She is often accompanied by a lion, and sometimes rides it. The Eanna in Uruk is dedicated both to her and Anu. As Irnini, she has a parakku (throne-base) at the cedar mountain.

"The Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld"

She determines to go to the Underworld. She threatened to smash the gate and raise the dead so that they would eat and outnumber the living unless the gatekeeper would open it for her. She holds the great keppu-toy (a whipping top). She is allowed in by the gate keeper, who takes her through seven gates to [Ereshkigal](#)'s realm. By Ereshkigal's rites, she is stripped of items of clothing as she passes through each of the gates: first her crown, then her earrings, then her necklace, then her tudditu (breast pins), then her belt of birthstones, then her wrist and ankle

bangles, and finally her garment. While in the underworld, no creatures engaged in acts of procreation. She was kept in Egalgina and brought forth by [Namtar](#) after being sprinkled with the water of life, and after 'His appearance is bright' has been cursed. She is led back out through the gates, given back her accouterments, and released in exchange for [Dumuzi](#) (Tammuz).

"The Epic of Gilgamesh"

She loved [Tammuz](#) in her youth, although he spends half the year in the nether world wailing. She loved a lion, a stallion, a shepherd, all of whom she required great sacrifice from and abandoned. She loved Ishullanu, a gardener who offered her fruit, but was taken aback when she revealed herself to him, so she turned him into a frog.

After [Gilgamesh](#) cleans himself up, following his defeat of [Humbaba](#), she asks him to be her lover and husband, and offers him many gifts and the homage of earthly rulers and kingdoms. She is rejected, both because of her godly nature, and as a fair-weather lover. Ishtar asks Anu to send the Bull of Heaven to kill Gilgamesh, and he agrees.

(See also the Hittite [Shaushka](#) and the Canaanite [Astarte](#) and [Anat](#))

Symbol: an eight or sixteen-pointed star

Sacred number: 15

Astrological region: Dibal (Venus) and the Bowstar (Sirius)

Sacred animal: lion, (dragon)

Siduri

- the barmaid, a manifestation of [Ishtar](#) who dwells at the lip of the sea, beyond which is the Land of Life, where [Utnapishtim](#) lives. She speaks with [Gilgamesh](#). She wears a veil.

Shamash (Babbar, [Utu](#))

Shamash is the sun god, the son of [Sin](#) and [Ningal](#). He rises from the mountains with rays out of his shoulders. He enters and exits the underworld through a set of gates in the mountain (exits from Mt. Mashu, "Gilgamesh IX ii") guarded by scorpion-people. He travels both on foot and in a chariot, pulled by fiery mules. He upholds truth, and justice. He is a lawgiver and informs oracles. [Nergal](#) is a corrupt aspect of his nature.

"Etana"

In Kish, the eagle and the serpent swore an oath to Shamash that they would not overstep the limits of Shamash. The eagle broke the oath and ate the eggs of the serpent. Shamash, 'whose net is as wide as earth', told the serpent how to serve the eagle justice. The serpent lured the eagle with a bull carcass and captured him. The eagle requested to be spared and the serpent refused, saying that Shamash's punishment would fall on him if he did not carry it out. He cut the eagle's wings and left him to die in a pit. The eagle prayed to Shamash for mercy, and Shamash refused to help personally, but sent [Etana](#) to help the eagle. He agreed to help Etana's infertility problem if Etana would help the eagle.

"Epic of Gilgamesh"

He loves [Gilgamesh](#), hates evil and instigates Gilgamesh's quest against [Humbaba](#), guiding him and receiving prayers from him along the way. He tries to intercede to [Ellil](#) on [Enkidu](#)'s behalf, but is unsuccessful. He rebukes Enkidu for cursing the Stalker and the temple prostitute for bringing him out of the wild.

See also the Hittite [Sun-god](#) and the Canaanite [Shapshu](#).

Symbol: Solar disk with a four point star inside with rays coming from between the points. A winged disk.

Sacred Number: 20

Aia

- [Shamash](#)'s consort

Kakka

[Anshar](#) and [Anu](#)'s vizier, who is sent to Kurnugi to deliver [Ereshkigal](#) the message that Anu wishes to deliver a gift to her via one of her messengers. Anshar sends him to round up [Lahmu](#) and [Lahamu](#) to send off [Marduk](#) for his battle with [Tiamat](#) and rally them to his side.

Ninlil

[Ellil](#)'s consort.

(see also the [Sumerian Ninlil](#).)

Nusku

the god of fire and [Ellil](#)'s vizier.

Gerra(Gibil)

- the god of fire, Anunitu ([Antu](#))'s son. He despairs and will not attack [Anzu](#) after Anzu has stolen the Tablet of Destinies from [Ellil](#).

Ishum (Hendursanga - 'lofty mace')

- He is the god of fire, and is adept at using weapons. He lights the way in front of [Erra](#) and the Sebitti. He advises Erra against attacking Marduk or his people in Babylon. When Erra takes [Marduk](#)'s seat, Ishum persuades him against destroying Babylon, finally appeasing him by promising that the other gods would acknowledge themselves as his servants.

Kalkal

- [Ellil](#)'s doorkeeper in Nippur.

Dumkina

- [Ea](#)'s lover, mother of [Bel](#) and [Marduk](#) (note Bel is likely to be another title for Marduk).

Nash (Nanshe)

- one of "the pure goddesses", [Ea](#)'s daughter. Her cult center is Sirara near Lagash.

Zaltu

- "strife", goddess created by [Ea](#) to complement [Ishtar](#).

Ninurta (shares some characteristics with Ningrisu)

Chamberlain of the Anunnaki, the war god, the champion of the land. He is the child of [Ellil](#) and [Mami](#). He was born in Ekur, Ellil's temple in Ekur. He is responsible for some small scale irrigation. He has a bow and arrow, sometimes they are poisoned. He also carries the mace, *Sharur*, which can act as a messenger between Ninurta and other beings (notably [Ea](#)). He can marshal the *Seven of Battle*, who can generate whirlwinds.

He bound the *Mountain of Stones* in his fury, conquered the [Anzu](#) with his weapon and slew the bull-man inside the Sea. (Dalley p. 204).

After the Tablet of Destinies was stolen, [Belit-ili](#), at Ea's advice, instructed him to kill Anzu. Initially his assault was futile, but Sharur relayed advice from Ea to him, which, when it was carried out allowed him to slay Anzu in a great onslaught. He recovered the Tablet of Destinies for Ellil. [Nissaba](#) performs a purification ceremony on him and he receives the following new names and shrines: Duku - 'holy mound' in Sumerian, Hurabtil - an Elamite god, Shushinak - patron god of the Elamite city Susa, Lord of the Secret, Pabilsag - god of the antediluvian city Larak, Nin-Azu - god of Eshunna, Ishtaran - god of Der, Zababa - warrior god of Kish, [Lugalbanda](#) - [Gilgamesh](#)'s father, Lugal-Marada - patron god of Marad, Warrior Tishpak - similar to Nin-Azu, Warrior of Uruk, Lord of the Boundary-Arrow, Panigara - a warrior god, and Papsukkal - vizier of the great gods.

Ninsun

Known as 'the great wild cow' and the great queen, she is [Gilgamesh](#)'s mother and [Lugalbanda](#)'s mate. She is wise, 'knows everything' and interprets Gilgamesh's dreams. She offers incense and drink to [Shamash](#) and questions his decision to send Gilgamesh against [Humbaba](#). When doing so, she wears a circlet on her head and an ornament on her breast. She adopts [Enkidu](#) prior to the quest against Humbaba.

Marduk

- son of [Ea](#) and [Dumkina](#). He supplants the other Babylonian deities to become the central figure of their pantheon. He is a "King of the Igigi" He often works with and asks questions of his father. He has fifty names many of which are those of other deities whose attributes he usurped. He was of proud form and piercing stare, born mature, powerful, and perfect and superior. He has four eyes, four ears, and emits fire from his mouth when he speaks. He is also gifted in magic.

[Anu](#) gave him the four winds to play with. When Anu's peace mission to [Tiamat](#) fails, Ea urges him into action. He goes before [Anshar](#) and the divine assembly and declares that he will defeat Tiamat and lay her head at his feet, but that the assembly must promise that he should be the one to fix fates and more or less assume the role of the leader of the pantheon. Anshar, [Lahamu](#), and Anu find him a shrine and Anu instills upon him the Anu-power in which, his word decrees fate. He is proclaimed king and invested with the scepter, throne, and staff-of-office. He is given an unfaceable weapon, the flood-weapon. He takes a bow and arrow and mace. He puts lightning in front of him, marshals his winds, makes a net to encircle Tiamat, fills his body with flame. He rides his storm-chariot driven by Slayer, Pitiless, Racer, and Flyer, poison-toothed, tireless steeds. He had a spell on his lips and an anti-toxin in his hand. He led the gods to battle. (P.251-252 Dalley)

[Qingu](#)'s strategy confused him. Tiamat tried to enspell him and wheedled at him. Marduk reproaches her and calls her out for single combat. She loses her temper and they fight. He unleashes his weapons at her, distended her body with winds, shot her in the belly with an arrow, split her in two and slit her heart. He defeats the rest of her forces and retrieves the Tablet of Destinies.

He smashed Tiamat's skull to herald her death and made half of her body the roof of the sky. He leveled Apsu, measured it and established numerous shrines for many of the gods. He set up stands for the gods, constructed the heavens and regulated the year, giving Shamash some dominion over the months and the year. He made the Tigris and Euphrates rivers from Tiamat's eyes and made mountains from her udders. He smashed the weapons of Tiamat's army and put images of them at the gates to the underworld. He set up his temple at Esharra and his seat in

Babylon. The gods honored him as king. He put blood and bones together as and made early man to bear the work of the gods, as in Atrahasis. For Qingu's part in the war he was made to provide the blood for the creation of man. He divided the Anunnaki and placed 300 to guard the sky, and six hundred to dwell in heaven and earth. He had them create Babylon building the Esagalia temple and a high ziggurat. Anshar gave him many new names: 1. Asarluhi, 2. Marduk, 3. The Son, The Majesty of the Gods, 4. Marukka, 5. Mershakushu, 6. Lugal-dimmer-ankia (King of heaven and earth), 7. Bel, 8. Nari-lugal-dimmer-ankia, 9. Asarluhi, 10. Namtila, 11. Namru, 12. 'Asare, 13. Asar-alim, 14. Asar-alim-nuna, 15. Tutu, 16. Zi-ukkina, 17. Ziku, 18. Agaku, 19. Shazu, 20. Zisi, 21. Suhrim, 22. Suhgurim, 23. Zahrim, 24. Zahgurim, 25. Enbilulu, 26. Epadun, 27. Gugal, 28. Hegal, 29. Sirsir, 30. Malah, 31. Gil, 32. Gilima, 33. Agilima, 34. Zulum, 35. Mummu, 36. Zulum-ummu, 37. Gizh- numun-ab, 38. Lugal-ab-dubur, 39. Pagal-guena, 40. Lugal-Durmah, 41. Aranuna, 42. Dumu-duku, 43. Lugal-duku, 44. Lugal-shuanna, 45. Iruga, 46. Irqingu, 47. Kinma, 48. Kinma, 49. E-sizkur, 50. Addu, 51. Asharu, 52. Neberu, 53. Enkukur. He becomes a firm lawgiver and judge who, when angered is not stoppable.

Later he becomes somewhat negligent and [Erra](#) challenges him by preparing to attack his people in Babylon. He responds to the challenge by saying that he already killed most of the people in the flood and would not do so again. He also states that no- one would be in control of things if he got off of his throne to work up a flood, to which Erra volunteers to run things from Marduk's throne.

Bel (Canaanite [Baal](#))

Cleverest of the clever and sage of the gods, he is the child of [Ea](#) and [Dumkina](#). This name (meaning 'lord') is most likely referring to [Marduk](#).

Ashur (A-sir, Arusar, A-shar, Assur)

god of Assyria and war. He is a "King of the Igigi"

Symbol: winged disk enclosing upper body, while he shoots an arrow.

Shullat

- [Shamash](#)'s servant.

Papsukkal

- vizier of the Great Gods, son of [Sin](#). While [Ishtar](#) was in the Underworld, he became gloomy and informed Sin and [Ea](#) of this plight.

Hanish

- the weather god's servant.

Adad (the Canaanite [Hadad](#), the Sumerian [Ishkur](#), the Hurrian [Teshub](#), the Canaanite/Egyptian [Resheph](#), Rimmon)

a storm god, [Anu](#)'s son. He holds a lightning bolt in his right hand and an axe in his left. He is partially responsible for the flood. He despairs and will not attack [Anzu](#) after Anzu has stolen the Tablet of Destinies from [Ellil](#).

Sacred number: 6

Sacred animal: Bull

Shara

- [Anu](#) and [Ishtar](#)'s son. He despairs and will not attack [Anzu](#) after Anzu has stolen the Tablet of Destinies from [Ellil](#).

Nin-ildu

- the carpenter god. He carries the pure axe of the sun.

Gushkin-banda

- creator of god and man, goldsmith god.

Nin-agal

- 'lord strong-arm' patron god of smiths. He chews copper and makes tools.

C. The Anunnaki and other chthonic deities and demons

Ereshkigal (Allatu)

- the supreme goddess of the underworld. [Nergal](#) is her consort. She is often considered [Ishtar](#)'s sister. When angered, her face grows livid and her lips grow black.

She doesn't know why Ishtar would visit her, but she allows her in, according to the ancient rites. She instructs [Namtar](#) to release his diseases upon Ishtar. When 'His appearance is bright' tries to get her to swear an oath, she curses him. She has Namtar release Ishtar in exchange for [Dumuzi](#).

[Anu](#) sends [Kakka](#) to her with a message and then sends Nergal to give her a throne upon which she is to sit and give judgment. She offers Nergal food, drink, a foot bath, and entices him with her body. Eventually he succumbs and they sleep with each other for seven days. She is enraged when he wishes to leave. She sends Namtar to heaven to request that Anu, [Ellil](#), and [Ea](#) send Nergal to her as one of the few favors she has ever had. If they do not, she will raise the dead and they will eat and outnumber the living. Nergal is brought back. In some versions of the myth, Nergal takes control of Namtar's attendant demons and grabs Ereshkigal by the hair. In this position she proposes marriage to him. In both versions they are married. (See also [Sumerian Ereshkigal](#) and the Hittite [Lelwanis](#))

Belit-tseri

- tablet-scribe of the underworld. She kneels before [Ereshkigal](#).

Namtar(a)

- the Fate-Cutter, [Ereshkigal](#)'s messenger and vizier, the herald of death. He commands sixty diseases, which are grouped by the part of the body which they affect. Offerings to him may stave off diseases. He takes [Ishtar](#) back out of the Underworld at Ereshkigal's command. He acts as her messenger to [Anu](#).

Sumuqan

- the cattle god, he resides in the underworld, in [Ereshkigal](#)'s court.

Nergal (Erragal, Erra, Engidudu

- 'lord who prowls by night') -, the Unsparing, god of the underworld, husband of [Ereshkigal](#), lover of [Mami](#). As Erra he is a hunter god, a god of war and plague. He is submissive to [Ea](#). He can open the doorposts to the underworld to allow the passage of a soul.

He achieved his post by refusing to stand before an address of Namtar. When Ereshkigal called him to be punished, he dragged her off of her throne by the hair, and threatened to decapitate her. She offered him the position as her consort and he accepted.

He is an evil aspect of [Shamash](#). He allows [Enkidu](#)'s spirit to visit [Gilgamesh](#) at the behest of Ea. He is sometimes the son of Ea. Prior to his first journey to the underworld, he builds a chair of fine wood under Ea's instruction to give to Ereshkigal as a gift from [Anu](#). He is advised not to take part of the food, drink and entertainment offered there. He is tempted by Ereshkigal and eventually succumbs, sleeping with her for seven days. He then takes his leave, angering her. The gatekeeper lets him out and he climbs the stairway to heaven. He hides from [Namtar](#) in heaven, but is discovered and returns to the underworld to marry Ereshkigal. In some versions, on the way back to the Underworld, he seizes control of Namtar's attendant demons and grabs Ereshkigal by the hair. In this position she offers marriage.

He commands the Sebitti, seven warriors who are also the Pleadies, they aid in his killing of noisy, over-populous people and animals. He rallies them when he feels the urge for war, and calls [Ishum](#) to light the way. They prefer to be used in war instead of waiting while Erra kills by disease.

He regards [Marduk](#) as having become negligent and prepares to attack his people in Babylon. He challenges Marduk in Esagila in Shuanna/Babylon. Marduk responds that he already killed most of the people in the flood and would not do so again. He also states that he could not run the flood without getting off of his throne and letting control slip. Erra volunteers to take his seat and control things. Marduk takes his vacation and Erra sets about trying to destroy Babylon. [Ishum](#) intervenes on Babylon's behalf and persuades Erra to stop, but not before he promises that the other gods will acknowledge themselves as Erra's servants. (See also [Sumerian Nergal](#))

Irra

- plague god, underling of [Nergal](#)

Enmesharra

- Underworld god

Lamashtu

- a dread female demon also known as 'she who erases'.

Nabu

- god of writing and wisdom

Nedu

- the guardian of the first gate of the underworld. (Dalley p. 175, "Nergal and Ereshkigal"). Also known as [Neti](#) to the Sumerians.

Ningizzia

- a guardian of the gate of heaven; a god of the underworld.

Tammuz ([Dumuzi](#), Adonis)

the brother and spouse to [Ishtar](#), or the lover of her youth. He is a vegetation god. He went into the underworld and was recovered through the intervention of Ishtar. He is sometimes the guardian of heaven's gates and sometimes a god of the underworld. He is friends with [Ningizzia](#). He is exchanged for Ishtar in the Underworld. He guards the Gate of [Anu](#) with [Gizzida](#).

Belili ([Geshtinanna](#))

- [Tammuz](#)/ [Dumuzi](#)'s sister, 'the one who always weeps', the wife of [Ningishzida](#).

Gizzida (Gishzida)

- son of [Ninazu](#), consort of [Belili](#), doorkeeper of [Anu](#).

Nissaba (Nisaba)

- cereal grain harvest goddess. Her breast nourishes the fields. Her womb gives birth to the vegetation and grain. She has abundant locks of hair. She is also a goddess of writing and learned knowledge. She performs the purification ceremony on [Ninurta](#) after he has slain [Anzu](#) and is given his additional names and shrines.

Dagan (Ugaritic for 'grain')

- chthonic god of fertility and of the Underworld. He is paired with [Anu](#) as one who acknowledges directives and courses of action put forth in front of the assembly of the gods. (See also the Canaanite [Dagon](#))

Birdu

- (means 'pimple') an underworld god. [Ellil](#) used him as a messenger to [Ninurta](#)

Sharru

- god of submission

Urshambi

- boatman to [Utnapishtim](#)

Ennugi

- canal-controller of the Anunnaki.

Geshtu-e

- 'ear', god whose blood and intelligence are used by [Mami](#) to create man.

D. Demigods, heroes, and monsters:

Adapa (Uan)

- the first of the seven antediluvian sages who were sent by [Ea](#) to deliver the arts of civilization to mankind. He was from Eridu. He offered food and water to the gods in Eridu. He went out to catch fish for the temple of Ea and was caught in a storm. He broke the South Wind's wing and was called to be punished. Ea advised him to say that he behaved that way on account of [Dumuzi](#)'s and [Gizzida](#)'s absence from the country. Those gods, who tended [Anu](#)'s gate, spoke in his favor to Anu. He was offered the bread and water of eternal life, but Ea advised against his taking it, lest he end his life on earth.

Atrahasis and Ut-napishtim,

Like the Sumerian [Ziusudra](#) (the Xisuthros of Berossus) or Noah from the Pentateuch, were the long-lived survivors of the great flood which wiped out the rest of humanity. In Atrahasis' case, [Ellil](#) had grown tired of the noise that the mass of humanity was making, and after a series of disasters failed to eliminate the problem, he had [Enki](#) release the floodgates to drown them out. Since Enki had a hand in creating man, he wanted to preserve his creation, warned Atrahasis, and had him build a boat, with which he weathered the flood. He also had kept his ear open to Enki during the previous disasters and had been able to listen to Enki's advice on how to avoid

their full effects by making the appropriate offerings to the appropriate deities. He lived hundreds of years prior to the flood, while Utnapishtim lives forever after the flood.

Utnapishtim of Shuruppak was the son of Ubaratutu. His flood has no reason behind it save the stirrings of the hearts of the Gods. As with Atrahasis, Utnapishtim is warned to build an ark by [Ea](#). He is also told to abandon riches and possessions and seek life and to tell the city elders that he is hated by [Enlil](#) and would go to the watery Abyss to live with Ea via the ark. He loads gold, silver, and the seed of all living creatures into the ark and all of his craftsmen's children as well. After Ea advises Enlil on better means to control the human population, (predators, famine, and plague), Enlil makes Utnapishtim and his wife immortal, like the gods.

Etana

- the human taken to the sky by an eagle. He was the king of Kish. [Ishtar](#) and the Igigi searched for a king for Kish. [Ellil](#) found a throne for Etana and they declared him the king. He was pious and continued to pray to [Shamash](#), yet he had no son. Shamash told him where to find the eagle with the cut wings, who would find for him the plant of birth. He found the eagle, fed it, and taught it to fly again. Not being able to find the plant, the eagle had Etana mount on his back and they journeyed to Ishtar, mistress of birth. On flying up to heaven, Etana grew scared at the height and went down. Then after some encouraging dreams tried to ascend to heaven on the eagle again. They succeeded. Etana had a son, Balih.

Lugalbanda

- a warrior-king and, with [Ninsun](#), the progenitor of [Gilgamesh](#). He is worshipped, being Gilgamesh's ancestor, by Gilgamesh as a god.

Gilgamesh (possibly Bilgamesh) and Enkidu

"Epic of Gilgamesh: Tablet I"

The son of the warrior-king [Lugalbanda](#) and the wise goddess [Ninsun](#), Gilgamesh built the walls of the city Uruk, and the Eanna (house of [An](#)) temple complex there, dedicated to [Ishtar](#). He is two-thirds divine and one-third human. He is tall and a peerless warrior. He is the king and shepherd of the people of Uruk, but he was very wild, which upset his people, so they called out to [Anu](#). Anu told [Aruru](#) to make a peer for Gilgamesh, so that they could fight and be kept occupied, so she created the wild-man Enkidu. Enkidu terrorizes the countryside, and a Stalker, advised by his father, informs Gilgamesh. They bring a love-priestess to bait Enkidu. She sleeps with him, and educates him about civilization, Gilgamesh and the city. Gilgamesh dreams about Enkidu and is anxious to meet him. Enkidu comes into the city Gilgamesh is on his way to deflower the brides in the city's "bride-house" and the two fight. They are evenly matched and become friends.

"Epic of Gilgamesh: Tablets II - V"

Gilgamesh decides to strengthen his reputation by taking on [Humbaba](#), [Enlil](#)'s guardian of the forest. Enkidu accompanies Gilgamesh and they spend much time in preparation. Eventually they find the monster and defeat him.

"Epic of Gilgamesh: Tablets VI - VIII"

Ishtar offers to become Gilgamesh's lover, but Gilgamesh insults her, saying that she has had many lovers and has not been faithful to them. Ishtar asks Anu to send the [Bull of Heaven](#) to punish Gilgamesh, and he does. Gilgamesh and Enkidu defeat the creature, but Enkidu falls ill and dies, presumably because the gods are unhappy that he helped kill Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven.

"Epic of Gilgamesh: Tablets IX - XI"

Gilgamesh mourns Enkidu and decides to visit [Utnapishtim](#), the only human who does not die. He goes to the mountains of Mashu and passes by the guardian scorpion-demons into the darkness. It becomes light as he enters the Garden of the Gods and he finds [Siduri](#) the Barmaid, to whom he relates his quest. She sends him to cross the waters of death and he confronts the boatman, Urshanabi. They cross and Gilgamesh speaks with Utnapishtim. Utnapishtim recounts the tale of the flood and challenges Gilgamesh to remain awake for six days and seven nights. He fails, but Utnapishtim's wife urges him to reveal to Gilgamesh a rejuvenative plant. Gilgamesh takes it, but loses it to a serpent before returning to Uruk.

"Epic of Gilgamesh: Tablet XII"

Another tablet of the Babylonian Gilgamesh story exists, which is similar to the [Sumerian version](#) of the tale. Enkidu volunteers to enter the underworld to recover Gilgamesh's pukku and mikku (drum and throwing stick). Gilgamesh warns him of the proper etiquette for the underworld, lest Enkidu be kept there. Enkidu prepares to enter the underworld, and is dressed, scented and bade good-bye. The Earth seizes him and Gilgamesh weeps. He pleads for Enkidu's sake to Enlil, [Sin](#), and finally to [Ea](#). Ea tells [Nergal](#) to let Enkidu's ghost escape the underworld and tell Gilgamesh about it. He tells Gilgamesh of the dead which he has seen there, of those who are cared for and those who aren't, indicating the sort of judgment and ritual associated with the afterlife and death.

Humbaba (Huwawa)

- this monster was appointed by [Ellil](#) to guard the cedar forest, which is in fact one large tree, the home of the gods, and terrify mankind. 'His shout is the storm-flood, his mouth, fire, his breath is death.' (Gardner & Maier p. 105) He has seven cloaks with which to arm himself. There is a gate and a path in the cedar mountain for Humbaba to walk on. [Gilgamesh](#) and Enkidu attack. Humbaba pleads for mercy, Enkidu argues against mercy, and Enkidu and Gilgamesh decapitate him. See also the Sumerian [Huwawa](#).

The Bull of Heaven

- this creature was created by [Anu](#) to kill [Gilgamesh](#) at [Ishtar](#)'s behest. At its snorting, a hole opened up and 200 men fell into it. When it fights Enkidu and Gilgamesh, it throws spittle and excrement at them. It is killed and set as an offering to [Shamash](#).

Anzu

- a demonic being with lion paws and face and eagle talons and wings. It was born on the mountain Hehe. Its beak is like a saw, its hide as eleven coats of mail. It was very powerful. [Ellil](#) appointed him to guard his bath chamber. He envied the Ellil-power inherent in Ellil's Tablet of Destinies and stole it while Ellil was bathing. With the Tablet of Destinies, anything he puts into words becomes reality. He takes advantage of this by causing [Ninurta](#)'s arrows to never reach their target. However, once [Ea](#)'s advice reached Ninurta, Anzu was slain by the hero's onslaught.

aqrabuamelu (girtablilu)

- scorpion-man, the guardians of the gates of the underworld. Their "terror is awesome" and their "glance is death". They guard the passage of [Shamash](#). They appraise [Gilgamesh](#) and speak with him.

Definitions:

Anunnaki

- gods (mostly of the earth). The sky Anunnaki set the Igigi to digging out the rivers

Igigi

- gods (mostly of the heavens) They are given the task of digging riverbeds by the Anunnaki. They rebelled against [Ellil](#).

Sebitti

- the seven warrior gods led by [Erra](#); in the sky they are the Pleiades. They were children of [Anu](#) and the [Earth-mother](#). Anu gave them fearsome and lethal destinies and put them under Erra's command. They prefer to exercise their skills instead of letting Erra stay in the cities with his diseases.

Utukki - demons

Muttabriqu - Flashes of Lightning

Sarabda - Bailiff

Rabishu - Croucher

Tirid - Expulsion

Idiptu - Wind

Bennu - Fits

Sidana - Staggerers

Miqit - Stroke

Bel Uri - Lord of the Roof

Umma - Feverhot

Libu - Scab

gallu-demons - can frequently alter their form.

umu-demons - fiercely bare their teeth.

IV. What about the Underworld and Heaven and all that?

For a more general discussion of this, take a look at the [Underworld](#) and [Cosmology](#) sections in the Sumerian FAQ, for the particulars, see below.

The [Igigi](#) and the [Anunnaki](#) met in heaven in Ubshu-ukkinakku, the divine assembly hall. The [Gilgamesh](#) epic has the gods dwelling in the cedar mountain. They had their parakku, throne-bases, there. It was an enormous tree at the cedar forest and was guarded by [Humbaba](#). There is a stairway up to heaven from the underworld.

As for the underworld Kurnugi (Sumerian for 'land of no return'). It is presided over by [Ereshkigal](#) and [Nergal](#). Within the house of Irkalla (Nergal), the house of darkness, the house of Ashes, no one ever exits. "They live on dust, their food is mud; their clothes are like birds' clothes, a garment of wings, and they see no light, living in blackness." It is full of dust and mighty kings serve others food. In Ereshkigal's court, heroes and priests reside, as well as [Sumuqan](#) and [Belit-tseri](#). The scorpion-people guard the gates in the mountain to the underworld which [Shamash](#) uses to enter and exit. There are seven gates, through which one must pass. At each gate, an adornment or article of clothing must be removed. The gates (gatekeepers?) are named: [Nedu](#), (En)kishar, Endashurimma, (E)nuralla, Endukuga/Nerubanda, Endushuba/Eundukuga, and Ennugigi. Beyond the gates are twelve double doors, wherein it is dark. [Siduri](#) waits there by the waters of death, beyond which, is the Land of the Living, where [Utnapishtim](#) and his wife dwell. Shamash and Utnapishtim's boatman, Urshanbi, can cross the waters. Ekalginga, the everlasting palace, is a place where [Ishtar](#) was held.

V. Hey! I read that Cthulhu is really some Babylonian or Sumerian god, how come he's not there under Kutu?

I have yet to find any secondary (or for that matter primary) source which lists Kutu as a Mesopotamian deity, or for that matter lists any name resembling Cthulhu at all. However, having been given a pointer by DanNorder@aol.com, I have confirmed that Kutha or Cutch was the cult city of [Nergal](#), the Akkadian god of plagues and the underworld (see above) and that 'lu' is the Sumerian word for man. So, Kuthalu would mean Kutha-man which could conceivably refer to Nergal. As far as I can tell it could mean Joe the Butcher or any of his neighbors who happen to live in Kutha just as easily. Nergal, of course bears little resemblance to Lovecraft's Cthulhu beyond the fact that both can be considered underworld powers. Those interested in further discussion about this might wish to contact Dan at the above address and they may wish to read alt.horror.cthulhu as well.

VI. So, in AD&D, [Tiamat](#) is this five-headed evil dragon, but they got her from the *Enuma Elish*, right? What about her counterpart, Bahamut?

Bahamut, according to Edgerton Sykes' *Who's Who of Non-Classical Mythology*, is "The enormous fish on which stands Kujara, the giant bull, whose back supports a rock of ruby, on the top of which stands an angel on whose shoulders rests the earth, according to Islamic myth. Our word Behemoth is of the same origin." (Sykes, p. 28)

[Note: Sykes's use of the phrase "Islamic myth" is misleading as this bit of cosmology is not considered Islamic doctrine. Bahamut is pre-Islamic, most likely Arabic. I don't have a second source for Kujara.]

Behemoth then, is usually the male counterpart to Leviathan, and is a great beast that roams on land. He is sometimes equated with a hippopotamus, and is alternately listed in the Old Testament as a creature on the side of God and as one over whom God has or will triumph over.

VII. I've heard there are Biblical parallels in Babylonian literature. What are they anyway?

Genesis: Creation of the universe

Ps:74:12-17 - YHWH vs. Leviathan; Marduk vs Tiamat. In the Enuma Elish, tablet IV, Marduk defeats the ocean goddess, Tiamat who is often depicted as a multi-headed dragon. He splits her apart, as YHWH splits apart the sea in Ps 74:13. He crushes her skull as YHWH crushes the skulls of the monster Leviathan in Ps 74:13-14. In tablet V, Marduk causes the crescent moon to appear, creates the seasons, the night and day, and creates springs from Tiamat's eyes, to form the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, as YHWH does in Ps 74:15-17 (Hooke p.106, Dalley pp.253-257)

Creation of humans.

Fall of man.

Adapa was the first "apkallu" (sage/priest), not the first man or first patriarch. He was given wisdom (knowledge of good and evil?) but not immortality. When in heaven (sent there for having broken the South Wind's wing), he is offered bread and water of eternal life. He refuses it, however having been tricked by Ea (in serpent role?) stating that he would be offered the bread and water of death instead. (Dalley pp. 182-188) In other references to the seven apkallu, he is the counsellor paired with the first anteluvian king on the Sumerian king lists (Dalley p. 328), Alulim - not Alulim himself, who was Adam's analog in patriarchal order.

Tower of Babel

As with the Sumerians, the most striking Biblical parallel within Akkadian myth is in the story of the flood. For the Babylonian account, see the entries on [Atrahasis](#) and Utnapishtim above.

Exodus - According to legend, Sargon was left in a basket in the Euphrates as an infant and "rose 'from an ark of bulrushes'" (Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* p. 101). His adoptive father was a "laborer in a palm garden who spotted the basket containing the remarkable child" (Crawford p. 42) Sargon was originally the cupbearer to a king (Ur-Zababa) before achieving leadership on his own. (Crawford p. 25)

Weeping for Tammuz and the month of Tammuz.

See also [Biblical Parallels in Sumerian Mythology](#).

VIII. Where did you get this info and where can I find out more?

Well this FAQ is primarily derived from the following works:

- Barraclough, Geoffrey (ed.) *The Times Consise Atlas of World History*, Hammond Inc., Maplewood, New Jersey, 1982.
- Dalley, Stephanie *Myths from Mesopotamia*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991. This inexpensive volume served as the bible for much of this FAQ. It contains translations of the major Akkadian language myths with footnotes, brief introductions, and a glossary.
- Gardner, John & Maier, John *Gilgamesh: Translated from the Sin-Leqi-Unninni Version*, Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1984. A column by column translation with notes and commentary following each column, by the late author of *Grendel*.
- Hooke, S. H., *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman Oklahoma, 1963.
- Kinnier Wilson, J. V., *The Rebel Lands : an Investigation Into the Origins of Early Mesopotamian Mythology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- McCall, Henrietta, *Mesopotamian Myths* University of Texas Press, Austin, 1990. A summary account of Dalley's book with nice pictures more cultural context.
- Oppenheim, A. Leo, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, Chicato, The University of Chicago Press, 1977. This is the source for the history and culture of the Babylonians and Assyrians for the interested lay-person.
- *The New American Bible*, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1970.

In addition the following books have occasionally proven helpful:

- Carlyon, Richard, *A Guide to the Gods*, Quill, William Morrow, New York, 1981.
- Hooke, S. H. *Middle Eastern Mythology*, Penguin Books, New York, 1963. This work covers Sumerian, Babylonian, Canaanite/Ugaritic, Hittite, and Hebrew mythologic material in brief and with comparisons.
- Jacobsen, Thorkild, *The Treasures of Darkness*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976. A good alternative to Kramer, Jacobsen explores Mesopotamian religious development from early Sumerian times through the Babylonian Enuma Elish. Most of the book winds up being on the Sumerians.

- Pritchard, James B., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, with Supplement*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1969.
 - Sykes, Edgerton, *Who's Who in Non-Classical Mythology*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993.
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Hittite/Hurrian Mythology REF 1.2

By Christopher B. Siren

Last modified Mar. 13th, 1998.

- [I. Who were the 'Hittites'?](#)
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I. Who were the 'Hittites'?

During the second millennium B.C. a group of people known as the Hittites, who spoke an Indo-European language, ruled over the 'Land of Hatti', in central and eastern Anatolia, that peninsula which is modern Turkey. They had displaced the previous occupants, the Hattians (who spoke a non-Indo-European language), and ruled from the city of Hattusas near the modern Boghazkoy in northern central Turkey, possibly as early as 1900 B.C. Much of the Cappadocian plateau was under their control through satellite kingdoms before 1800 B.C. and they enjoyed a thriving trade with the Assyrians. Around 1800 B.C. Anittas and his father Pitkhanas of Kussara sacked several Hittite cities, including Hattusas, though Anittas laid a curse upon that city and trade broke off until the founding of the Old Kingdom under King Labarnas around 1680 B.C. He and his descendents greatly expanded the region of Hittite control, crossing the Taurus mountains and waging war on Syria and Assyria. King Mursilis (~1620-1590 B.C.), Labarnas' grandson by adoption, brought down the Old Kingdom of Babylon - Hamurabi's dynasty. This expanded realm, also stretching to Anatolia's west coast, proved to be susceptible to internal power struggles. In 1525 B.C., Telepinus, last king of the Old Kingdom seized control and sacrificed some of the Western districts and all of the territory east of the Taurus mountains in favor of a more easily managed kingdom.

The Hurrians occupied the land between the Hittites and Assyria, having descended from the mountains south of the Caspian Sea. They ruled the kingdom of Mitanni. In the late 15th century B.C. the Hittite empire's beginning is marked by an influx of Hurrian names into the royal family. Tudhalyas I (1420 B.C.) reunited Western Anatolia under Hittite rule, and retook Aleppo but lost the Black Sea coast to the Kaska tribes. After some difficulty with the Mittani the Hittites resurged under King Suppilulimas around 1344-1322 taking a firmer hold on Syria. With Egypt, they dominated the lands of Canaan and the Levant during the 1200's. Their prosperity came to a sudden end when the invasion of the Sea Peoples coincided with increasing trouble from the Kaskas. While Hittite culture continued through about 700 B.C., the Empire was shattered into several kingdoms and pressures such as the growing Assyrian Empire helped keep it from uniting again.

The Hittites were a patriarchal, highly agricultural society. They had rich iron deposits which they mined and traded with the Assyrians. They also used it for weaponry and were rather successful in the use of a three-man chariot. Through trade and conquest the languages and cultures of their

neighbors seeped into Hittite society. Babylonian and Hurrian deities were worshiped along-side or assimilated with the native Hittite deities. This merging of cultures and free use of foreign languages is rather fortuitous. Parallel Hittite and Akkadian treaties and similar texts helped in cracking the Hittite hieroglyphic code. Unfortunately, while the ability to translate Hittite hieroglyphics has improved, the pronunciation of several Hittite ideograms, and hence their transcription into English, remains elusive. Often, as in the case with the Storm-god, we must resort to a descriptive name, or else use the appropriate Hurrian or Akkadian name.

II. What Deities did they worship?

The Hittites had an abundant number of local cult deities and sets of local pantheons. As the government became more centralized, particularly during the imperial period around 1400 - 1200 B.C., there were efforts to equate many of these local deities and form a state pantheon. Such a pantheon was headed by the [Weather-god](#)/Storm-god, who also represented the mountains, and his consort - usually the earth goddess, who was also attached to the waters of rivers and the sea. The Hittites themselves write of 'the thousand gods of Hatti', and more than eight-hundred such names have been discovered. (Considerably fewer will be dealt with here.) The associated myths have both Hittite and Hurrian content, with the origin of many suspected to be Hurrian. The Kumarbis-Ullukummis myth is chief among the Hurrian tales and the Illuyankas stories and missing god myths of Telipinus and the missing Storm-god are thought to be more Hattic. There also exist fragments of a Hittite version of the Gilgamesh epic and many [Akkadian deities](#) were worshiped outright. Doubtless the Hatti left their mark in Hittite religion as well.

You will notice that many of the names carry an optional 's' as a suffix, which comes from the nominative case ending for Hittite.

A. Hittite and Hurrian deities.

Alalu(s)

He was the king in heaven in olden days and [Anus](#) was the first among the gods. Anus served as his cupbearer for 9 years before defeating him and dispatching him to under the earth.

Anu(s) ([Akkadian](#) in origin)

While [Alalus](#) was king in heaven, Anus was more powerful. He served as Alalus' cup bearer for nine years and then defeated him, dispatching him to under the earth. He took his seat on the throne and had [Kumarbis](#) as his cupbearer. Likewise, after nine years Kumarbis rebelled, chased Anus - who fled in the sky like a bird, and bit off and swallowed his phallus. In this act Anus had some revenge by impregnating Kumarbis with the [Storm-god](#), the [Aranzahus](#) (Tigris) river, and [Tasmisus](#). He then hid himself in heaven. He advised the Storm-god on the places where he might exit Kumarbis. After the Storm-god's birth, they plotted to destroy Kumarbis and, with his other children, apparently succeeded.

Kumarbi(s) - 'the father of all gods' according to the Hurrians.

He is sometimes equated with [Enlil](#) and [Dagan](#). His city is Urkis. He thinks wise thoughts and carries a staff. He served as [Anus](#)'s cup-bearer for nine years and then rebelled, chased Anus, and bit off and swallowed his phallus, thereby becoming impregnated with the [Storm-god](#), the [Aranzahus](#) (Tigris) river, and [Tasmisus](#). With that news, he spat out Aranzahus and Tasmisus of on Mount Kanzuras. The Storm-god begins to exit through Kumarbis's 'tarnassus', causing him to moan in pain. He asks [Ayas](#) to give him his son to devour, which he does. Ayas has 'poor'

magic worked on him and his 'tarnassus' is secured, so the Storm-god exits through his 'good place' instead. He is then presumably defeated by the Storm-god, Anus, and his offspring.

During a plot to overthrow the Storm-god, he lay with a Rock as if it were a woman. He instructs [Imbaluris](#), his messenger to send a message to the [Sea](#), that Kumarbis should remain father of the gods. The Sea hosts a feast for him and later Kumarbis' Rock gives birth to [Ullikummis](#). Kumarbis announces that his son will defeat the Storm-god, his city Kummiya, his brother Tasmisus and the gods from the sky. He charges Imbaluris to seek out the [Irsirra deities](#) to hide Ullikummis from the [Sun-god](#), the Storm-god, and [Ishtar](#).

Imbaluris

He is [Kumarbis](#)' messenger. He is sent to warn the [Sea](#) that Kumarbis' must remain the father of the gods.

Mukisanus

He is [Kumarbis](#)' vizier

Hannahanna(s) ([Nintu](#), Mah) - the mother of all the gods.

She is associated with Gulsus. After [Telepinu](#) disappears, the [Storm-god](#) complains to her. She sends him to search himself and when he gives up, she dispatches a bee, charging it to purify the god by stinging his hands and feet and wiping his eyes and feet with wax.

She recommends to the Storm-god that he pay the Sea-god the bride-price for the Sea-god's daughter on her wedding to Telipinu.

Apparently she also disappears in a fit of anger and while she is gone, cattle and sheep are stifled and mothers, both human and animal take no account of their children. After her anger is banished to the Dark Earth, she returns rejoicing. Another means of banishing her anger is through burning brushwood and allowing the vapor to enter her body.

After Inara consulted with her, she gave her a man and land. Soon after, Inara is missing and when Hannahanna is informed thereof by the Storm-god's bee, she apparently begins a search with the help of her Female attendant a. She appears to consult with the Sun-god and the War-god, but much of the text is missing.

Upelluri (Ubelluris)

Similar to Atlas, this giant carries the world on his shoulders. The olden gods built the earth and heaven upon him though he did not notice, even when those two were separated with a cleaver. On the direction of [Kumarbis](#)' messenger [Imbaluris](#), the [Irsirra deities](#) place [Ullikummis](#) on his right shoulder where the child grows. [Ea](#) interviews him, in search of Ullikummis and Upelluri admits to a small pain on his shoulder, although he can't identify which god is causing it.

Storm/Weather-god (Hurrian's Teshub, Taru, Luwian's Tarhun(t) - 'The Conqueror'), 'The king of Kummiya', 'King of Heaven, Lord of the land of Hatti'.

He is chief among the gods and his symbol is the bull. As Teshub he has been pictured as a bearded man astride two mountains and bearing a club. He is a god of battle and victory, especially when the battle is with a foreign power. As Taru, he is the consort of [Wurusemu](#). He was the child of [Anus](#) and [Kumarbis](#) - conceived along with [Tasmisus](#) and the [Aranzahus](#) (Tigris) river when Kumarbis bit off and swallowed Anus' phallus. He is, however, considered [Ea](#)'s son in the myth of [Ullikummis](#). He is informed by Anus of the possible exits from Kumarbis, and tries to exit through Kumarbis's 'tarnassas', causing him great pain. With the

'tarnassas' blocked, he exits through Kumarbis' 'good place'. He plots with Anus, Tasmisus, and Aranzhus to destroy Kumarbis, and apparently succeeds seizing kingship in heaven.

He sent rain after the fallen [Moon-god/Kashku](#) when he fell from heaven.

Alerted to the imminent arrival of the [Sun-god](#), who in some myths is his son, he has Tasmisus prepare a meal for their guest and listens to his report about the sudden appearance of the giant Ullikummis. He and Tasmisus then leave the kuntarra and are led to Mount Hazzi by his sister, [Ishtar](#), where they behold the monstrous creature. He looks upon Kumarbis' son with fear and Ishtar chides him. Later, emboldened, he has Tasmisus prepare his bulls and wagon for battle, and has him call out the thunderstorms, lightning and rains. Their first battle resulted in his incomplete defeat. He dispatches Tasmisus to his wife, [Hebat](#), to tell her that he must remain in a 'lowly place' for a term. When Tasmisus returns, he encourages the Storm-god to seek Ea in the city Abzu/Apsu and ask for the 'tablets with the words of fate' (Tablets of Destiny? '[me](#)'?). After Ea cleaves off Ullikummis' feet, he spurs Tasmisus and the Storm-god on to battle the crippled giant. Despite the diorite man's boasting, the Storm-god presumably defeats him.

He fought with the Dragon [Illuyankas](#) in Kiskilussa and was defeated. He called the gods for aid, asking that [Inaras](#) prepare a celebration. She does so and when the dragon and his children have gorged themselves on her feast, the mortal Hupasiyas binds him with a rope. Then the Storm-god, accompanied by the gods, sets upon them and destroys them.

In another version of that myth, he loses his eyes and heart to Illuyankas after his first battle. He then marries a poor mortal woman and marries their son to Illuyankas daughter. He has the son ask for his eyes and heart. With their return, he attacks the dragon again. When his son sides with Illuyankas, the Storm-god kills them both.

When his son, [Telepinus](#), is missing he despairs and complains to the Sun-god and then to [Hannahanna](#), who tells him to search for him himself. After searching Telepinus' city he gives up.

In other versions of this myth, it is the Storm-god who is missing. One is almost exactly the same, and in another, he journeys to the Dark Earth in his anger, and is returned with the help of his mother - here Wuruntemu/Ereshkigal/the Sun-goddess of Arinna.

He sends Telipinu to recover the Sun-god who had been kidnapped by the Sea-god. The Sea-god is so intimidated that he gives Telipinu his daughter in marriage but demands a bride-price from the Storm-god. After consulting with Hannahanna, he pays the price of a thousand sheep and a thousand cattle.

He notices his daughter, Inara, is missing and sends a bee to Hannahanna to have her search for her.

Seris (Serisu)

This is one of the bulls sacred to the [Storm-god](#). In preparation for battle, the Storm-god has [Tasmisus](#) anoint his horns with oil and drive him up Mount Imgarra with [Tella](#) and the battle wagon.

Tella (Hurris)

This is another bull sacred to the [Storm-god](#). In preparation for battle, the Storm-god has [Tasmisus](#) plate his tail with gold and drive him up Mount Imgarra with [Seris](#) and the battle

wagon.

Aranzahus - The Tigris river deified.

A child of [Anus](#) and [Kumarbis](#), he was the brother of the [Storm-god](#) and [Tasmisus](#), spat out of Kumarbis' mouth onto Mount Kanzuras. Later he colludes with Anus and the Storm-god to destroy Kumarbis.

Tasmisus

A child of [Anus](#) and [Kumarbis](#), he is conceived along with the [Storm-god](#) and [Aranzahus](#). The brother of the Storm-god and Aranzahus, he was spat out of Kumarbis upon Mount Kanzuras. Later he colludes with Anus and the Storm-god to destroy Kumarbis. He serves as the Storm-god's attendant.

He spies the [Sun-god](#) approaching and informs the Storm-god that this visit bodes ill. At the Storm-god's command he has a meal set up for their visitor. After the Sun-god's tale, he and the Storm-god depart and are met by [Ishtar](#), who takes them to Mt. Hazzi near Ugarit, where they can see [Ullikummis](#). The Storm-god has him take his bulls up Mt. Imgarra and prepare them for battle. He is also ordered to bring forth the storms, rains, winds, and lightning. After their defeat, he is dispatched by the Storm-god to [Hebat](#), to tell her that he must remain in a 'lowly place' for a term. He returns and encourages the Storm-god to seek [Ea](#) in the city Abzu/Apsu and ask for the 'tablets with the words of fate' (Tablets of Destiny? 'me'?). After Ea cleaves off Ullikummis' feet, he spurs Tasmisus and the Storm-god on to battle the crippled giant.

Suwaliyattas

He is a warrior god and probably the brother of the [Storm-god](#).

Hebat (Hurrian name) (Hepit, Hepatu)

The matronly wife of the [Storm-god](#). She is sometimes depicted standing on her sacred animal, the lion. After the Storm-god and [Astabis](#) failed attacks on [Ullikummis](#), the giant forced her out of her temple, causing her to lose communication with the gods. She frets that Ullikummis may have defeated her husband and expresses her concern to her servant [Takitis](#), charging him to convene the assembly of the gods and bring back word of her husband. Presumably she is brought word of his defeat. [Tasmisus](#) visits her in the high watchtower, telling her that the Storm-god is consigned to a 'lowly place' for a length of time. She is the mother of [Sharruma](#).

Wurusemu, (Wuruntemu?), 'Sun Goddess of Arrina', 'mistress of the Hatti lands, the queen of heaven and earth', 'mistress of the kings and queens of Hatti, directing the government of the King and Queen of Hatti'

This goddess is later assimilated with [Hebat](#). She made the cedar land. She is the primary goddess in Arrina, with [Taru](#) as her consort. She is a goddess of battle and is associated with Hittite military victory. She is the mother of the Storm-god of Nerik, and thereby possibly associated with Ereshkigal. She aids in returning him from the underworld.

Sharruma (Hurrian name), 'the calf of Teshub'

The son of [Teshub](#) and [Hebat](#), this god is symbolized by a pair of human legs, or a human head on a bull's body. He is later identified with the Weather-god of Nerik and Zippalanda.

Takitis

He is [Hebat](#)'s servant. After Hebat was driven from her temple he is told of her concern for her [husband](#) and charged with convening the assembly of the gods and returning with word

of her husband's fate.

Mezullas

She is the daughter of the [Storm-god](#) and the [Sun-goddess of Arinna](#). She has influence with her parents.

Zintuhis

She is the granddaughter of the [Storm-god](#) and the [Sun-goddess of Arinna](#).

Telepinu(s) 'the noble god'

An agricultural god, he is the favorite and firstborn son of the [Storm-god](#). He 'harrows and plows. He irrigates the fields and makes the crops grow.' (Gurney p. 113) He flies into a rage and storms off, losing himself in the steppe and becoming overcome with fatigue. With his departure, fertility of the land, crops and herds disappears and famine besets man and god. [Hannahanna's](#) bee finds him, stings his hands and feet, and wipes his eyes and feet with wax, purifying him. This further infuriates him, and he wreaks further havoc with the rivers and by shattering houses and windows. Eventually, the evil and malice is removed through magic by [Kamrusepas](#), but not before Telepinus thunders with lightning. Telepinus returns home, restoring fertility and tending to the life and vitality of the royal family. His prosperity and fertility is symbolized by a pole suspending the fleece of a sheep. In other versions of this myth, the Storm-god or the Sun-god and several other gods are missing instead.

He is asked by his father to recover the Sun-god from the Sea-god, and so intimidates the Sea-god that he is given his daughter as a bride.

Ullikummi(s), the diorite man

He is born of [Kumarbis](#) and the Rock. This god is made entirely of diorite. He was born to be used as a weapon to defeat the [Storm-god](#) and his allies. Kumarbis had him delivered to the [Irsirra](#) deities to keep him hidden from the Storm-god, the [Sun-god](#), and [Ishtar](#). After the Irsirra deities presented him to [Ellil](#), they placed him on the shoulder of [Upelluri](#) where he grows an acre in a month.

After fifteen days he grows enough so that he stands waist deep in the sea when the Sun-god and he notice each other. Alerted by the Sun-god, the Storm-god eventually prepares for battle atop Mount Imgarra, yet their first battle results in an incomplete victory. He drives [Hebat](#) from her temple, cutting off her communication with the other gods. Astaris leads seventy gods on attack against him, attempting to draw up the water from around him, perhaps in order to stop his growth. They fall into the sea and he grows to be 9000 leagues tall and around, shaking the heavens, the earth, pushing up the sky, and towering over Kummiya. [Ea](#) locates him and cuts off his feet with the copper knife that separated the heaven from the earth. Despite his wounds he boasts to the Storm-god that he will take the kingship of heaven. Presumably, he is none-the-less defeated.

Sun-god (of Heaven)

Probably an [Akkadian](#) import, this god is one of justice and is sometimes the king of all gods. An ally of the [Storm-god](#), he notices the giant [Ullikummi](#) in the sea and visited the Storm-god, refusing to eat until he reports his news. After he has done so, the Storm-god proclaims that the food on the table shall become pleasant, which it does, and so the Sun-god enjoys his meal and returns to his route in heaven.

When [Telepinus](#) disappears, bringing a famine, he arranges a feast, but it is ineffective in assuaging their hunger. At the Storm-god's complaint, he dispatches an eagle to search for the god, but the bird is unsuccessful. After the bee discovers Telepinus, he has man perform a ritual. In another version of the missing god myth, he is one of the missing gods. He keeps several sheep. At the end of the day, he travels through the nether-world.

He was kidnapped by the Sea-god and released when Telipinu came for him.

In a longer version of that story, the Sea-god caught him in a net, possibly putting him into a Kukubu-vessel when he fell. During his absence, hahhimas (Frost) took hold.

Hapantallis

He is the [Sun-god's](#) shepherd.

Moon-god (Hurrian Kashku)

He fell upon the 'killamar', the gate complex, from heaven and disappeared. [Storm-god/Taru](#) rain-stormed after him, frightening him. Hapantali went to him and uttered the words of a spell over him. While known to bestow ill omens, he can be appeased by sheep sacrifice.

TheSea, the Waters

She is told by [Imbaluris](#) that ' [Kumarbis](#) must remain father of the gods!'. Struck with fear by this message, she makes ready here abode and prepares to act as hostess for a feast for Kumarbis. This feast may have served as a meeting of Mother-goddesses who delivered Kumarbis' child by the Rock, [Ullikummis](#).

TheSea-god

He quarreled and kidnapped the Sun-god of Heaven. When Telipinu came to recover the Sun-god, the Sea-god was so intimidated that he also gave him his daughter. he later demanded a bride-price for her of the Storm-god, and was eventually given a thousand cattle and a thousand sheep. In another version, he caught the Sun-god in a net as he fell, and may have sealed him in a *Kukubu*-vessel, allowing Hahhimas (Frost to take hold of most of the other gods.

He questions the fire in its role in one of Kamrusepa's healing spells.

Inaras

Daughter of the Storm-god and goddess of the wild animals of the steppe. After the [Storm-god's](#) initial defeat by [Illuyankas](#), she follows his request to set up a feast. She recruits Hupasiayas of Zigaratta, to aid in revenge on Illuyankas, by taking him as a lover. She then sets about luring Illuyankas and his children to a feast. After the dragon and his children gorge themselves on her meal, Hupasiayas binds him with a rope. Then the Storm-god sets upon them and defeats them.

She then gives Hupasiayas a house on a cliff to live in, yet warns him not to look out the window, lest he see his wife and children. He disobeys her, and seeing his family begs to be allowed to go home. Gurney speculates that he was killed for his disobedience.

She consults with Hannahanna, who promises to give her land and a man. She then goes missing and is sought after by her father and Hannahanna with her bee.

Illuyankas - the Dragon.

He defeated the [Storm-god](#) in Kiskilussa. Later he was lured from his lair with his children by a well dressed [Inaras](#) with a feast. After they were too engorged to get into their lair again, the

Storm-god, accompanied by the other gods, killed him.

In another version of the myth, he defeated the Storm-god and stole his eyes and heart. Later, his daughter married the son of the Storm-god. Acting on the Storm-god's instruction, his son asked for the eyes and heart. When these were returned to him, the Storm-god vanquished Illuyankas, but slew his son as well when the youth sided with the dragon.

The ritual of his defeat was invoked every spring to symbolize the earth's rebirth.

Hedammu

He is a serpent who loved Ishtar.

Irsirra deities

These gods who live in the dark earth are charged by [Kumarbis](#) through [Imbaluris](#) to hide [Ullikummiss](#) from the sky gods, the [Sun-god](#), the [Storm-god](#), and [Ishtar](#). They are also charged with placing the child on the shoulder of [Upelluri](#). Later they accept the child and deliver it to [Ellil](#), before placing it on Upelluri's right shoulder.

Hapantalliyas/Hapantalli

He took his place at the [Moon-god](#)'s side when he fell from heaven on the gate complex and uttered a spell.

Kamrusepa(s) (Katahziwuri)

She is the goddess of magic and healing. She witnessed and announced the [Moon-god](#)'s fall from heaven on to the gate complex.

After [Telepinus](#) has been found, yet remains angry, she is set to cure him of his temper. She performs an elaborate magical ritual, removing his evil and malice.

In another tablet, she performs the spell of fire, which removes various illnesses, changing them to a mist which ascends to heaven, lifted by the Dark Earth. The Sea-god questions the fire on its role.

Astabis (Zamama, Akkadian [Ninurta](#))

He is a Hurrian warrior god. After the [Storm-god](#)'s first attack on [Ullikummiss](#) is unsuccessful, he leads seventy gods in battle wagons on an attack on the diorite giant. They try to draw the water away from him, perhaps in order to stop his growth, but they fall from the sky and Ullikummiss grows even larger, towering over the gate of Kummiya.

Uliliyassis

He is a minor god who, properly attended to, removes impotence.

Kurunta?

This god's symbol is the stag. He is associated with rural areas.

Kubaba

She is the chief goddess of the Neo-Hittites, she became Cybele to the Phrygians and Cybele to the Romans.

Yarris

He is a god of pestilence. A festival was held for him every autumn.

Hasamelis

He is a god who can protect travelers, possibly by causing them to be invisible.

Zashapuna

He is the chief god of the town of Kastama, held in greater regard there than the Storm-god, possibly gaining such influence through drawing lots with the other gods.

Zaliyanu

She is the wife of Zashapuna.

Zaliyanu

She is the concubine of Zashapuna.

Papaya

One of the deities who sat under the Hawthorn tree awaiting the return of Telipinus.

Istustaya

One of the deities who sat under the Hawthorn tree awaiting the return of Telipinus.

Miyatanzipa

One of the deities who sat under the Hawthorn tree awaiting the return of Telipinu. (S)he? also sat under the ippiyas tree when Hannahanna found the hunting bag.

Fate-goddesses

They were among the deities who sat under the Hawthorn tree awaiting the return of Telipinu. In one myth, they and the Mother-goddesses are missing.

Dark-goddess

One of the deities who sat under the Hawthorn tree awaiting the return of Telipinu.

Tutelary-deity, (Sumerian Lamma)

One of the deities who sat under the Hawthorn tree awaiting the return of Telipinu.

Uruzimu

A deity involved in returning the lost Storm-god of Nerik.

Hahhimas (Frost)

When the Sea-god captures the Sun-god, he takes hold of the other gods and of the land's plants and animals, paralyzing them. He is half-brother to Hasamili's brothers and spares them from his grip.

B. Akkadian Imports:

Anu

See [section A](#).

Antu (See Assyro-Babylonian [Antu](#))

[Antu](#)'s female counterpart, imported to the Hittites through the Hurrians.

Ellil (See Assyro-Babylonian [Ellil](#))

He is presented with [Ullikummi](#) by the [Irsirra deities](#) and declares that the child will bring the mightiest battles and an awesome rival to the [Storm-god](#). Later, [Ea](#) and presumably the Storm-

god present before him a case against [Kumarbis](#) for his creation of Ullikummis. He counters with Kumarbis' good record of worship and sacrifice and is in turn countered with Ea's testimony describing Ullikummis.

Ninlil (See Assyro-Babylonian [Ninlil](#) [Ellil](#)'s wife. She was imported by way of the Hurrians.

Lelwanis (Lilwani, [Ereshkigal](#), sometimes assimilated with [Ishtar](#)), 'Sun of the Earth'
Goddess of the earth and the nether-world, appeasement of her through sheep sacrifices helps remove threats from evil omens.

Ereshkigal

This goddess is the mother of the Storm-god. She plays a role in returning him from the underworld by opening the gates of the Dark Earth.

Ayas ([Ea](#))

He is the keeper of the 'old tablets with the words of fate' (Tablets of Destiny? ' [me](#)'?). The [Ullikummis](#) myth has him as the father of the [Storm-god](#).

He attends [Kumarbis](#) and fetches that god's son to be devoured as a means of relieving Kumarbis pains from the Storm-god. He advises Kumarbis to have experts work 'poor' magic to aid him in his distress, bringing bulls and sacrifices of meal. This magic helps secure Kumarbis's 'tarnassus'.

He is prevailed upon by the Storm-god following his defeat by Ullikummis. He and presumably the Storm-god present a case against Kumarbis' for his creation of Ullikummis before [Ellil](#). Rebutting Ellil's defense that Kumarbis is well behaved regarding worship and sacrifices, Ea proclaims that Ullikummis 'will block off heaven and the gods holy houses.' He seeks out [Upelluri](#), and after interviewing him, locates Ullikummis feet on Upelluri's shoulder. He charges the olden gods to deliver the copper knife with which they severed heaven from earth, in order to cut through Ullikummis' feet. He then spurs [Tasmisus](#) and the Storm-god on to fight the crippled giant.

Tapkina(Hurrian) ([Damkina](#))

[Ea's](#) wife, imported from the Akkadians by way of the Hurrians.

Shaushka (Hurrian) ([Ishtar](#))

She takes the form of a winged female standing on a lion.

She spies her brothers, the [Storm-god](#) and [Tasmisus](#), leaving the kuntarra following word of the appearance of [Ullikummis](#). She leads them by hand, up Mount Hazzi, from which they can view the giant. When the Storm-god is vexed and fearful at the site of [Kumarbis](#)' son, she chides him. Later, she takes up her galgalturi/harp and sings to the blind and deaf Ullikummis, but her folly is exposed to her by a great wave from the sea, who charges her to seek out her brother who is yet to be emboldened to the inevitable battle.

She was loved by the serpent [Hedammu](#).

Ninatta

[Shaushka](#)'s attendant.

Kulitta

[Shaushka](#)'s attendant.

C. Demons

Various rituals were performed to call upon demons for protection or to drive away baneful deities summoned by sorcerers.

Alauwaimis

Properly propitiated with ritual, libation, and goat sacrifice, this demon drives away evil sickness.

Tarpatassis

Properly propitiated with ritual and the sacrifice of a buck, this demon staves off sickness and grants long, healthy life.

D. Mortals

Hupasiya(s)

He is a resident of Ziggarratta. He is recruited by Inaras to aid in defeating Illuyankas. He agrees to her plan after eliciting her promise to sleep with him. When Illuyankas and his children are gorged on Inaras's feast, he ties them up for the Storm-god to kill. He is set up in a house by Inaras with the instructions not to look out the window while she is away, lest he see his family. He does, and begs to go home. Here the text is broken and some researches assume that he is killed.

III. Cosmology and the structure of the universe.

I haven't found as much about this as I would like:

The olden gods built heaven and earth upon [Upelluri](#). They had a copper knife which they used to cleave the heaven from the earth, after which they stored it in ancient storehouses and sealed them up - only to open them and retrieve it for use on [Ullikummi](#).

Kuntarra house

The house of the gods in heaven.

The Dark Earth, i.e. the Underworld.

It has an entrance with gates. It holds bronze or iron *palhi*-vessels with lead lids. That which enters them, perishes within and doesn't return. Telipinu and Hannahanna's anger is banished there.

IV. Source material:

- Goetze, Albrecht "Hittite Myths, Epics, and Legends", *Ancient Near East Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James Pritchard, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1955. This has been my primary source for the texts of the Hittite myths and prayers.
- Gurney, O. R. *The Hittites*, Penguin Books, New York, 1990. Gurney's work is a solid overview of Hittite history, culture, religion, and mythology.
- Hoffner, Harry *Hittite Myths*, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1990. Intended to be a more idiomatic translation, Hoffner's work also includes material more recent than Goetz. I am

replacing that material from Goetz with which this conflicts.

- S.H.Hooke *Middle Eastern Mythology*, Penguin Books, New York, 1963. Hooke takes a comparative and summary approach to Sumerian, Babylonian, Canaanite, Hittite, and Hebrew mythological material.
 - Laroche, Emmanuel, articles within *Mythologies Volume One*, Bonnefoy, Yves (compiler), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991. This handful of topically focused articles provides depth in some areas of Hittite and Hurrian religion but lacks an overall picture as Bonnefoy's work was designed for an encyclopedic format.
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Canaanite/Ugaritic Mythology FAQ, ver. 1.2

By Christopher B. Siren

Based on John C. Gibson's *Canaanite Mythology* and S. H. Hooke's *Middle Eastern Mythology*

Last modified: May 25th 1998

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I. Who do we mean by 'Canaanites'?

Linguistically, the ancient Semites have been broadly classified into Eastern and Western groups. The Eastern group is represented most prominently by Akkadian, the language of the Assyrians and Babylonians, who inhabited the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys. The Western group is further broken down into the Southern and Northern groups. The South Western Semites inhabited Arabia and Ethiopia while the North Western Semites occupied the Levant - the regions that used to be Palestine as well as what is now Syria, Israel and Lebanon, the regions often referred to in the Bible as Canaan.

Recent archaeological finds indicate that the inhabitants of the region themselves referred to the land as ' *ca-na-na-um*' as early as the mid-third millenium B.C.E. (Aubet p. 9) Variations on that name in reference to the country and its inhabitants continue through the first millenium B.C.E. The word appears to have two etymologies. On one end, represented by the Hebrew *cana'ani* the word meant merchant, an occupation for which the Canaanites were well known. On the other end, as represented by the Akkadian *kinahhu*, the word referred to the red-colored wool which was a key export of the region. When the Greeks encountered the Canaanites, it may have been this aspect of the term which they latched onto as they renamed the Canaanites the Phoenikes or Phoenicians, which may derive from a word meaning red or purple, and descriptive of the cloth for which the Greeks too traded. The Romans in turn transcribed the Greek *phoinix* to *poenus*, thus calling the descendants of the Canaanite emigres to Carthage 'Punic'. However, while both Phoenician and Canaanite refer to approximately the same culture, archaeologists and historians commonly refer to the pre-1200 or 1000 B.C.E. Levantines as Canaanites and their descendants, who left the bronze age for the iron, as Phoenicians.

It has been somewhat frustrating that so little outside of the Bible and less than a handful of secondary and tertiary Greek sources (Lucian of Samosata's *De Syria Dea* (The Syrian Goddess), fragments of the *Phoenician History* of Philo of Byblos, and the writings of Damasacius) remain to describe the beliefs of the people of the area. Unlike in Mesopotamia, papyrus was readily available so that most of the records simply deteriorated. A cross-roads of foreign empires, the region never truly had the chance to unify under a single native rule; thus scattered statues and conflicting listings of deities carved in shrines of the neighboring city-states of Gubla (Byblos), Siduna (Sidon), and Zaaru (Tyre) were all the primary sources known until the uncovering of the city of Ugarit in 1928 and the digs there in the late 1930's. The Canaanite myth cycle recovered from the city of Ugarit in what is now Ras Sharma, Syria dates back to at least 1400 B.C.E. in its written form, while the deity lists and statues from other cities, particularly Gubla date back as far as the third millennium B.C.E. Gubla, during that time, maintained a thriving trade with Egypt and was described as the capital during the third millennium B.C.E. Despite this title, like Siduna (Sidon), and Zaaru (Tyre), the city and the whole region was lorded over and colonized by the Egyptians. Between 2300 and 1900 B.C.E., many of the coastal Canaanite cities were abandoned, sacked by the Amorites, with the inland cities of Aleppo and Mari lost to them completely. The second millennium B.C.E. saw a resurgence of Canaanite activity and trade, particularly noticeable in Gubla and Ugarit. By the 14th century B.C.E., their trade extended from Egypt, to Mesopotamia and to Crete. All of this was under the patronage and dominance of the 18th dynasty of Egypt. Zaaru managed to maintain an independent kingdom, but the rest of the soon fell into unrest, while Egypt lost power and interest. In 1230, the Israelites began their invasion and during this time the possibly Achaean "Sea Peoples" raided much of the Eastern Mediterranean, working their way from Anatolia to Egypt. They led to the abandonment of Ugarit in 1200 B.C.E., and in 1180, a group of them established the country of Philistia, i.e. Palestine, along Canaan's southern coast.

Over the next three or four hundred years, the Canaanites gradually recovered. Now they occupied little more than a chain of cities along the coast, with rival city-states of Sidon and Tyre vying for control over larger sections of what the Greeks began to call Phoenicia. Tyre won out for a time and the unified state of Tyre-Sidon expanded its trade through the Mediterranean and was even able to establish colonies as far away as Spain. The most successful of these colonies was undoubtedly Carthage, said in the Tyrian annals to have been established in 814 B.C.E. by Pygmalion's sister Ellisa. She was named Dido, 'the wandering one', by the Lybian natives and escaped an unwelcome marriage to their king by immolating herself, a story which Virgil also recounts in the *Aeneid*. Her dramatic death brought about her deification while the colonists continued to practice the Canaanite religion, spreading it under Carthage's auspices while that state expanded during sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. Carthage outlasted its patron state as Tyre and Sidon were crushed under Assyrian expansion beginning during the reign of Sennacherib around 724 B.C.E. and ending under Nebuchadnezzar around 572 B.C.E.

The Phoenician era saw a shift in Canaanite religion. The larger pantheon became pushed to the wayside in favor of previously less important, singular deities who became or, in the case of Baalat, already were the patron city-gods, born witness to by ruling priest-kings.

II. What Deities did they worship?

As mentioned above, different cities had different concepts of not only which gods were ranked where in the pantheon, but also of which gods were included and what some of their basic attributes were. While El or Il, whose name means 'god', is commonly described as the creator of the earth, the Arameans ranked Hadad before him. Also, many city gods were named Baal, meaning 'lord'. Baal-

Sidon, the city god of Sidon was thus an entirely different deity than Baal-Hadad, the storm god. Given the dearth of material from outside of Ugarit, if other cities or regions are not mentioned in the entry, the details can be assumed to be particular to Ugarit.

A. Primarily beneficent and non-hostile gods:

El - (also called Latipan, and possibly Dagon)

He is known as the Father of the gods, 'the father of mankind', the 'Bull', and 'the creator of creatures'. He is grey haired and bearded and lives at [Mt. Lel](#). He is a heavy drinker and has gotten extremely drunk at his banquets.

As a young god, he went out to the sea and, spying two ladies, one of whom is presumably [Athirat](#), becomes aroused, roasts a bird and asks the two to choose between being his daughters or his wives. They become his wives and in due course they give birth to [Shachar](#), [Shalim](#), and possibly other gracious gods, who could be Athirat's seventy children and/or much of the rest of the pantheon. The new family raises a sanctuary in the desert and lived there for eight years.

He orders that [Yam](#) be given kingship and sets [Kothar-and-Khasis](#) to build the new king a throne. The gods warn that Yam has been shamed and may wreck destruction, so El ameliorates him by renaming him *mddil* - 'beloved of El' and throws a feast for him. El warns though that this is contingent on his driving out of [Baal](#), who may fight back. Following Yam's demise, he favors the god [Mot](#).

While Baal is declared king and judge, he remains a resident of El and Athirat's palace as El refuses him permission to build an appropriate mansion, in spite of [Aqhat](#) before him and threatens to strike him in the head when he gives his response. He then replies that he knows how contemptuous she is and won't stand in her way.

Athirat (Asherah, Ashtartian - 'the Lady of the Sea', Elat - 'the goddess')

[Baal](#) and [Anat](#) hope to use her to influence El on the issue of Baal's palace. Initially suspicious and fearful of them on behalf of her children, but she warms up when she sees that they have brought gifts. She and Anat successfully intercede with El on Baal's behalf for permission for Baal to build a more suitable court.

When Baal is found dead, she advocates her son [Athtar](#) be made king. Her sons, the "'pounders' of the sea", apparently colluded with [Mot](#) and were smited by Baal with sword and mace upon his return. Baal-Hadad's creatures devour her handmaidens, so she sends them to El. El tells them to go into the wilderness and there birth horned buffalo, which will distract Baal-Hadad.

She and Anat serve as nursemaids for [Keret](#)'s son Yassib, but reminds Keret of his pledge of wealth for Huray, perhaps causing his decline in health because of its lack of fulfillment.

Qadshu

A Syrian goddess, who has occasionally been tentatively identified with nude fertility goddess statues. Also spelled Qodesh, meaning 'holy', and used as an epithet of Athirat. She had been identified with the Egyptian Qetesh

Qodesh-and-Amrur 'fisherman of Athirat'

[Baal](#)'s messenger to [Kothar-and-Khasis](#). He is also [Athirat](#)'s servant and dredges up provisions to entertain her guests from the sea with a net. It is interesting to note that in

Dan 4:13(10) similar words appear to refer to an angel and have been translated as 'holy messenger' or 'holy sentinel'.

Kothar-and-Khasis ('skillful and clever', also called Chousor and Heyan ([Ea](#)) and identified with Ptah)

He is the craftsman god and is identified with Memphis.

He is ordered by [El](#) to build [Yam](#)'s throne. He upbraids Yam for rising against [Baal](#) and threatens him with a magic weapon. He gives Baal the magic weapons Yagrush (Chaser) and Aymur (Driver).

He crafts Baal's bribe for [Athirat](#), a temple serving set of gold and silver. He build's Baal's second house and insists over Baal's objections on including a window.

He constructs a bow and arrows set for [Aqhat](#), presenting them first to [Daniel](#) and staying for a feast.

Shachar 'Dawn'

[Shalim](#)'s twin twin and one of the first, if not only, pair of gracious gods, the children and cleavers of the sea. They were born of [El](#) and [Athirat](#) or her female companion. The new family builds a sanctuary in the desert and lives there for eight years. According to Isaiah 14:12, he is the father of Helel or Lucifer, the 'light-bringer', usually taken to mean the morning-star.

Shalim 'Sunset/Dusk'

[Shachar](#)'s twin and one of the first, if not only, pair of gracious gods, the children and cleavers of the sea. They were born of [El](#) and [Athirat](#) or her female companion. The new family builds a sanctuary in the desert and lives there for eight years.

Shamu (Baalshamem?)

Not found in the Ugarit texts, this sky god was the chief of the pantheon at the Syrian city of Alalakh.

Baal (also called Baal-Zephon(Saphon), Hadad, Pidar and Rapiu (Rapha?) - 'the shade')

Goddess of the Sea and mother of the gods. She is [El](#)'s loving consort and is protective of her seventy children who may also be known as the gracious gods, to whom she is both mother and nursemaid. Her sons, unlike Baal initially, all have godly courts. She frequents the ocean shore. In the Syrian city of Qatra, she was considered Baal-Hadad's consort.

While washing clothing with a female companion by the sea, she is spied by [El](#), who roasts a bird and invites the two to choose between being his daughters or his wives. They choose to become his wives and in due course give birth to the gracious gods, the cleavers of the sea, including [Shachar](#) and [Shalim](#). The new family builds a sanctuary in the desert and lives there for eight years.

The son of [El](#), the god of fertility, 'rider of the clouds', and god of lightning and thunder. He is 'the Prince, the lord of earth', 'the mightiest of warriors', 'lord of the sky and the earth' (Alalakh). He has a palace on [Mt. Zephon](#). He has a feud with [Yam](#). His voice is thunder, his ship is a snow bearing cloud. He is known as Rapiu during his summer stay in the underworld.

He upbraids the gods for their cowardice when they intend to hand him over to Yam's messengers and attacks them but is restrained by [Athtart](#) and [Anat](#). [Kothar-and-Khasis](#) gives

him the magic weapons Yagrush (Chaser) and Aymur (Driver). He strikes Yam in chest and in the forehead, knocking him out. Athtart rebukes Baal and calls on him to 'scatter' his captive, which he does. In an alternate version of this episode, he slays Lotan (Leviathan), the seven-headed dragon. The battle may have been representative of rough winter sea-storms which calmed in the spring and which were preceded and accompanied by autumn rains which ended summer droughts and enabled crops to grow.

After his victory he holds a feast and remarks on his lack of a proper palace, instead retaining residence with El and [Athirat](#). He sends messengers to Anat to ask her to perform a peace-offering that he might tell her the word which is the power of lightning and seek lightning on the holy Mt Zephon. She does so and he welcomes her. Hearing his complaints Anat leaves to petition El for a new palace for Baal. Rejected, Baal dispatches [Qodesh-and-Amrur](#) to Kothar-and-Khasis with a request to make a silver temple set with which to bribe Athirat. He and Anat view Athirat with trepidation keeping in mind past insults which he has suffered at the hands of the other gods. He and Anat ask Athirat to ask El for permission to build a more extravagant house and Athirat's request is granted. Gathering cedar, gold, silver, gems, and lapis at Mt. Zephon, he calls Kothar-and-Khasis, feeding him and instructing him on how to build the palace. He doesn't want a window, for fear of Yam breaking through or his daughters escaping, but Kothar-and-Khasis convinces him to allow its inclusion so that he might lightning, thunder, and rain through it.

At its completion he holds a feast, takes over scores of towns and allows the window to be built. He threatens to ask [Mot](#) to invite any of Baal's remaining enemies to come for a visit and at night, binds the lightning, snow and rains. He sends [Gupn](#) and [Ugar](#) to Mot to invite him to acknowledge his sovereignty at his new palace. He sends messengers to Mot to carry this message to him and they return with a message of such weight that Baal declares himself Mot's slave. He hopes to ameliorate Mot by having [Sheger](#) and [Ithm](#) supply live sheep and cattle for the god to feast upon. Fearing Mot he seeks [Shapshu](#)'s advice and sires a substitute on a cow. He (or possibly his substitute) dies and remains in the underworld for seven years. El dreams that he is alive again but he is absent. [Ashtar](#) attempts to take Baal's place, but can not. Shapshu searches for him. Baal returns and fights Mot's allies, the sons of Athirat and the yellow ones. After seven years, Mot returns, demanding one of Baal's brothers lest he consume mankind. Baal rebuffs him and they fight tooth and nail. Shapshu separates the two declaring that Baal has El's favor and Baal resumes his throne.

As Baal-Hadad, he sends monstrous creatures to attack the handmaidens of [Yarikh](#), and of Athirat of the Sea. He hunts the horned, buffalo-humped creatures which were birthed by the handmaidens at the advice of El. During the hunt he is stuck in a bog for seven years and things fall to pot. His kin recover him and there is much rejoicing.

Once when he was out hunting, Anat followed him. He spotted her, fell in love and copulated with her in the form of a cow. She gave birth to 'a wild ox' or a 'buffalo', telling him of the event on Mt. Zephon. This is probably not their only affair. (See also Theology 100 Online Glossary - Baal, Encyclopedia Mystica - Baal)

Gapn (vine)

[Baal](#)'s page and messenger to both [Anat](#) and [Mot](#).

Radmanu (Pradmanu)

a minor servitor of [Baal](#).

Ugar (cultivated field?)

[Baal](#)'s other page and messenger to both [Anat](#) and [Mot](#). He is possibly the patron city-god of Ugarit.

Pidray 'daughter of the mist', 'daughter of light(ning)'

[Baal](#)'s daughter. She is sometimes a love interest of [Athtar](#).

Tallay = 'she of dew', 'daughter of drizzle'

[Baal](#)'s daughter.

Arsay = 'she of the earth', 'daughter of [ample flows]'

[Baal](#)'s daughter.

Ybrdmy

[Baal](#)'s daughter.

Athtart (Athtart-name-of-Baal, Astarte, Ashtoreth, Ashtart)

She is a consort of [Baal](#), and lesser goddess of war and the chase. Outside of Ugarit, many nude goddess statues have been tenuously identified with her as a goddess of fertility and sex. In Sidon she merited royal priests and priestesses. There she served as a goddess of fertility, love, war and sexual vitality and to that end had sacred prostitutes. She was the Phoenecian great goddess and was identified with Aphrodite by the Greeks.

She restrains Baal when he intends to attack [Yam](#)'s messengers. She rebukes Baal for holding Yam captive and calls on him to 'scatter' Yam, which he does.

Apparently she, along with [Anat](#), is willing to become Baal's cupbearer once he achieves a proper palace. (See also Theology 100 Online Glossary - Astarte

Anat (Anath, Rahmay - 'the merciful')

She [Baal](#)'s sister and the daughter of [El](#). Goddess of war, the hunt, and savagery. She is an archer. Virgin, sister-in-law (progenitor?) of peoples (Li'mites?). She and [Athirat](#) are nursemaids to the gracious gods.

She restrains Baal when he intends to attack Yam's messengers. In missing texts, she killed [Yam-Nahar](#), the dragon, the seven-headed serpent. She also destroyed [Arsh](#), [Atik](#), [Ishat](#), and [Zabib](#), all enemies of Baal.

She holds a feast at Baal's palace to celebrate his victory over Yam. After the guests arrive, she departs her abode and adorns herself in rouge and henna, closes the doors and slaughters the inhabitant of two nearby towns, possibly Baal's enemies. She makes a belt of their heads and hands and wades through the blood. She lures the towns' warriors inside to sit and joyfully massacres them. She then makes a ritual peace offering and cleans up. This is possibly related to a seasonal fertility ritual welcoming the autumn rains. Anat receives messengers from Baal thinking that some new foe has arisen, but they assure her that he only wishes that she make a peace offering that he might tell her the secret of lightning and seek it on [Mt. Zephon](#). She does so, demanding first to see the lightning, and is welcomed by Baal from afar. Hearing him complain of lack of a proper mansion, she storms off to El, creating tremors. She threatens to mangle his face lest he heed her and have Baal's court constructed, yet her plea is rejected. She is assisted in her petition, possibly by [Athtart](#). She accompanies Baal to Athirat with a bribe and assists Athirat in her successful petition to El for Baal's court.

After Baal dies, she searches for him and, finding his body goes into a violent fit of mourning. She has Shapash take his body to Mt. Zephon, where she buries it and holds a feast in his honor. After seven years of drought, she finds [Mot](#), and cuts, winnows, and sows him like corn.

She attends the feast where [Daniel](#) presents [Aqhat](#) with a bow and arrows set made by [Kothar-and-Khasis](#). Desiring the bow, she offers Aqhat riches and immortality, for it. He refuses and so she promises vengeance upon him should he transgress and leaves for [Mt. Lel](#) to denounce him to El. Upset with El's response, she threatens to strike his head, sarcastically suggesting that Aqhat might save him. El remarks that he won't hinder her revenge, so she finds Aqhat, and taking the form of a kinswoman, lures him off to Qart-Abilim. Unsuccessful with her first attempt there, she calls her attendant warrior [Yatpan](#) to take the form of an eagle, and with a flock of similar birds pray strike Aqhat as he sits on the mountain. They do so and Aqhat is slain, unfortunately, the bow falls into the waters and is lost and Anat laments that her actions and Aqhat's death were in vain.

When Baal was out hunting, she followed after him and copulated with him in the form of a cow. She gave birth to 'a wild ox' or a 'buffalo', visiting Mt. Zephon to tell Baal of the good news. This is probably not their only affair.

Baalat

The 'mistress' of Gubla she was not found in Ugarit. This great fertility goddess was the foremost deity of that city. She served as protector of the city and of the royal dynasty. She was associated with Baal-Shamen and she assimilated the characteristics of the Egyptian goddesses Hathor and Ast Isis).

Tanit

Known as the 'lady of Carthage' and the 'face of Baal', Tanit was the great goddess of the Carthaginians and, with Baal Hammon co-protector of that city. She is listed first of all deities in Carthage.

Shapshu (Shapash)

She is the sun-goddess (Akkadian Shamash, a male deity) and is known as the torch of the gods and pale Shapshu. She often acts as messenger or representative on [El](#)'s behalf. She has some dominion over the shades and ghosts of the nether-world. [Kothar-and-Khasis](#) may be her companion and protector.

She tells [Athtar](#) that he will loose kingship to [Yam](#) under El's auspice and rebuffs his complaints by recalling his lack of wife and children.

She is said to be under [Mot](#)'s influence when [Baal](#) is preoccupied with his lack of a palace and not raining. The weather then is particularly hot.

When Mot's messenger seeks Baal, she advises the thunder-god to procure a substitute, to satisfy Mot and then take his servants and daughters and venture into the underworld. At the direction of [Anat](#), she carries Baal's body back to [Mt. Zephon](#). She is told by El that he dreamed Baal was alive and she searches for him. When Baal returns and fights with Mot, she separates them, declaring that Baal has El's favor.

Yarikh

He is the moon god. 'The illuminator of myriads (of stars)', 'lamp of heaven', possibly also the crescent moon and 'lord of the sickle' and thereby the father of the [Kotharat](#). He is patron of the city Qart-Abilim.

After sunset he embraces [Nikkal-and-Ib](#) and becomes determined to marry her. He seeks [Khirkhib](#) out to arbitrate the brideprice, but instead Khirkhib tries suggests other potential mates

in the daughters of Baal. Undaunted, Yarikh presents a lavish brideprice to Nikkal-and-Ib's family and the two are wed.

[Baal-Hadad](#)'s creatures devour his handmaidens, so he sends them to [El](#). El tells them to go into the wilderness and there birth horned buffalo, which will distract Baal-Hadad.

Kotharat (was thought to be Kathirat) 'skillful'

They are a group of goddesses associated with conception and childbirth. '...The swallow-like daughters of the crescent moon.' (Gibson p. 106). They are also associated with the new moon. They attend [Daniel](#) for seven days to aid in the conception of [Aqhat](#) and receive his sacrifice.

Athtar (Ashtar, 'Athtar, Atra of the sky) 'the terrible'

He is a son of [Athirat](#), possibly a god of the desert or of artificial irrigation. He is sometimes a suitor of [Pidray](#). As the great god of the Sabeans and Himyar (both South Arabian states), he was identified with Venus and was sired by the moon on the sun. He loses his kingship to [Yam](#) at the behest of [El](#) and is warned off from an attack on Yam by [Shapshu](#). He complains to her of his lack of status, palace and court.

He attempts to take Baal's place at his throne while Baal is dead, but he is too small for the seat and rejects it, becoming king of the earth instead.

Sheger ('offspring of cattle')

He is the god of cattle

Ithm

He is the god of sheep

Hirgab

He is the father of the eagles.

S,umul

She is the mother of the eagles. She ate the body of [Aqhat](#).

Elsh

He is the steward (carpenter?) of [El](#) and of [Baal](#)'s house. His wife is the stewardess (carpenter?) of the goddesses.

Sha'taqat 'drives away'

She is the flying demoness who drives away [Keret](#)'s disease on behalf of [El](#) with a touch of her wand to his head.

'god(s) of the fathers'

They are ancestral or clan deities, commonly associated with one family or another, outside of the main pantheon.

Nikkal-and-Ib 'great lady and clear/bright/fruit' or 'Great goddess of fruit' ([Ningal](#))

She is possibly the daughter of [Dagon of Tuttul](#), or else of [Khirkhib](#). She is romanced by [Yarikh](#) and marries him after Yarikh arranges a brideprice with Khirkhib and pays it to her parents.

Khirkhib (was thought to be Hiribi), king of summer, king of the raiding season (autumn)

He is probably a Hurrian deity. He acts as a matchmaker between [Yarikh](#) and [Nikkal-and-Ib](#), initially trying to dissuade Yarikh from pursuing her suggesting [Pidray](#) and [Ybrdmy](#) as alternative choices.

Dagon of Tuttul

He is a Syrian version of Dagon, and the probable father of [Nikkal-and-Ib](#). Ugarit's Dagon was the father of Baal and may have been identified with El. There were also temples to Dagon in Mari and Emar. To the Phoenicians, he was a god of wheat and the inventor of the plow. The Philistines adopted him as their own and depicted him with the upper torso of a man and the back half of a fish. (See also the Assyro-Babylonian [Dagan](#) and the Hittite [Kumarbi](#))

Baal-Shamen (Baal-Shamain) 'lord of the skies'

Lord of the Assembly of the gods at Gubla. He was the great god of the Aramaean kingdoms of Hama and Laash and the protector of their rulers.

Milqart (Melqart, Baal Tsur, Milkashtart?) - 'king of the city', the hunter, 'fire of heaven'.

Patron god of Tyre, he was the god of the Metropolis and of the monarchy at Tyre and Carthage. His cult spread throughout the Mediterranean region, but has not been found at second millennium sites. As with the Babylonian Nergal/Erra, he has been identified with Heracles archetypes. Greek sources imply that he was a dying and rising vegetation god, and that he was associated with the sacred marriage like the Sumerian god, Dumuzi. He was ritually immolated in an annual festival. He was also a god of the sea and was pictured mounted on a hippocampus.

Eshmun 'the holy prince'

He was a god of healing and the great god in Sidon. He was known in Tyre, Cyprus, and Carthage, but not in Ugarit. In the 5th century AD, Damascius identified him with the Greek god Asclepius.

B. Chaos gods, death gods and baneful gods.

Yam (Nahar, Yaw, Lotan?, Leviathan?)

He is god of sea and rivers, he dwells in a palace under the sea. He carries a feud with [Baal](#). He may have had in his following a dragon (tnn) which lives in the sea, a serpent (btn), and/or Lotan/Leviathan, or may have been all of those creatures.

He is given kingship by [El](#). He threatens vast destruction until El names him 'beloved of El' and sends him on his way to oust Baal. Upbraided by [Kothar-and-Khasis](#), he dispatches messengers to El to demand the delivery of Baal. Baal strikes him with Yagrush and Chaser in the chest and forehead, knocking him down. He is slain and scattered at the urging of [Athtart](#). The battle may have been representative of rough winter sea-storms which calmed in the spring and which were preceded and accompanied by autumn rains which ended summer droughts and enabled crops to grow.

Arsh

The 'darling of the gods', a monstrous attendant of [Yam](#), slain by [Anat](#). Arsh lives in the sea.

Atik

The 'calf of [El](#)', an enemy of [Baal](#). Slain by [Anat](#).

Ishat (fire)

The 'bitch of the gods', an enemy of [Baal](#), slain by [Anat](#).

Zabib (flame? flies?)

The daughter of [El](#), an enemy of [Baal](#), slain by [Anat](#).

Mot(-and-Shar) 'Death and Prince/Dissolution/Evil'

'the beloved one'- Mot is the god of sterility, death, and the underworld. In one hand he holds the scepter of bereavement, and in the other the scepter of widowhood. His jaws and throat are described in cosmic proportions and serve as a euphemism for death.

When he has influence over [Shapshu](#), it is unusually hot and dry. He sits on a pit for a throne in the city of [Miry](#) in the underworld.

Prior to the conception of the gracious gods, he is pruned and felled like a vine by the vine dressers.

He is favored by [El](#) following [Baal's defeat of Yam](#) and Baal refuses him tribute. When Baal's messengers deliver him an invitation to feast at Baal's new palace, he is insulted that he is offered bread and wine and not the flesh he hungers for. In fact, he threatens to defeat Baal as Baal did Leviathan, causing the sky to wilt and then eat Baal himself. Baal would then visit his palace in the underworld. He is pleased that Baal submits to him. Baal goes to the underworld and either he or his substitute is eaten by Mot. Presumably the sons of [Athirat](#) had some part in his death. After seven years of famine, [Anat](#) seizes Mot, splits, winnows, sows and grinds him like corn. Baal eventually returns and defeats Mot's allies. After seven years Mot returns and demands Baal's brother, lest he wipe out humanity. Baal rebuffs him and the two have a mighty battle, but are separated by Shapshu who declares Baal to have El's favor.

'The yellow ones of Mot'

[Mot](#)'s henchmen who are slain by [Baal](#) upon his return.

Horon

He is probably a cthonic deity.

Resheph

'prince Resheph' is the god of pestilence.

aklm - 'the devourers'

These are some creatures who fought [Baal-Hadad](#) in the desert, they remind some of grasshoppers.

Rephaim (Rpum) - 'shades'

These are deities of the underworld whom [Daniel](#) meets in his journey there. They may have been involved in negotiations with him for the return of his son [Aqhat](#). Eight of them led by Repu-Baal (Rapiu? [Baal](#)?) arrive at a feast given by [El](#) in chariots, on horseback, and on wild asses.

Molech (Melech, Malik, Milcom?, Milqart?)

Not explicitly found in the Ugarit texts, Molech is a bit of an enigma. He shows up in the Old Testament in Leviticus 18 and 20, 1 Kings 11, 2 Kings 23, and Jeremiah 32. From that he appears to be a god of the Ammonites - a region west of the Jordan - whose worshipers sacrificed children in fires at temples, some of which were in the Valley of Hinnom, i.e. Gehenna, just south of Jerusalem. The Old Testament also names the similarly spelt "Milcom" as a god of the Ammonites leading to the suspicion that they are the same god. Molech is probably not the original name of the deity. There has been a good deal of argument as to whether Molech could be identified with another foreign deity and which deity that would be, or whether *molech* was simply a term which referred to child sacrifice of any sort. The Canaanite

gods [Mot](#) and [Milqart of Tyre](#), and the Mesopotamian god [Nergal](#), whom I believe is somewhere referred to as Malik=king, are a couple of the prime candidates for being Molech. For some online commentary on this check out [Gwen Saylor's correspondence](#). For more in depth off-line discussion see:

Day, John, *Molech: A God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989.

C. Demi-gods and Heroes

Keret

Keret was a king (of Khubur?) and possibly the son of [El](#) (this may be an expression for a fortunate person) who lost his estate and his successive eight wives to death, disease, and accident before any one of them could produce an heir. Having fallen asleep in tears, he is visited by El in a dream and offered kingship and riches to assuage his sorrow. This is ineffective as Keret only desires sons and heirs. El directs him to make an animal and wine sacrifice to El and [Baal](#) on the tower and then muster an army to lay siege to the city of Udm. There, Keret is to refuse offers from the Udm's king Pabil and demand his daughter, the fair Huray. Keret does as instructed, vowing to himself to give Huray an enormous sum of wealth upon his success.

Returning to his estate with Huray, Keret is blessed by El at Baal's behest and is promised eight sons, the first of which, Yassib, shall have [Athirat](#) and [Anat](#) as nursemaids. In addition, Huray will bear eight daughters all of whom as blessed as a first-born child. Athirat calls attention to Keret's promise of wealth to Huray which he has yet to fulfill.

Later, Keret and Huray prepare a great feast for the lords of Khubur. Later still Keret has become deathly ill and Huray entreats guests at a feast to mourn for him and make sacrifices on his behalf.

The household is tense and Keret's son Elhu, despondently visits his father. Keret tells him not to sorrow, but to send for his sympathetic sister, Keret's daughter Thitmanat ('the eighth one'). Her sympathy, heightened Keret expects from her surprise at his state will evoke the attention of the gods during a sacrifice he intends to perform. Indeed she weeps readily when the truth is revealed. Meanwhile, the rains have ceased with Keret's illness, but return after a ceremony on [Mt. Zephon](#). El convenes an assembly of the gods and dispatches the demoness [Sha'taqat](#) who cures Keret. Keret's son and heir Yassib, unaware of his father's cure entreats him to surrender his throne as he has been remiss in his duties, but Yassib is rebuffed and cursed.

Daniel

'He of Harnan', a devotee of Rapiu ([Baal](#)) and a patriarchal king. Like Keret, Daniel is in mourning because unlike his brothers he had no sons. So, for several days he sacrificed food and drink to the gods. On the seventh day, Baal takes notice and successfully petitions [El](#) to allow Daniel and his wife, Danatay, to have a child, citing, among other reasons, that the child will be able to continue the contributions and sacrifices to their temples. El informs Daniel of his impending change of fortune. He rejoices and slaughters an ox for the [Kotharat](#), pouring sacrifices to them for six days and watching them depart on the seventh. During some missing columns, Danatay gives birth to [Aqhat](#). Later, [Kothar-and-Khasis](#) arrives with a specially crafted bow and arrows set for Aqhat. Daniel and Danatay hold a feast, inviting the god, and Daniel presents Aqhat with the bow reminding him to sacrifice the choicest game to the gods. When

Aqhat is slain, Daniel's daughter [Pughat](#) notices the eagles and the drought and becomes upset. Daniel prays that Baal might return the rains and travels among the fields coaxing the few living plants to grow and wishing that Aqhat were there to help harvest them. Pughat informs him of Aqhat's demise. Daniel then swears vengeance upon his son's slayer. In succession he spies some eagles, [Hirgab](#), and [Sumul](#). He calls upon Baal to break their wings and breast-bones, then he searches their insides for Aqhat's remains. Initially not finding them, he asks Baal to restore the eagles and Hirgab. Finding Aqhat's remains within Sumul, he buries him and calls upon Baal to break the bones of any eagle that may disturb them and curses the lands near which his son was slain. His court goes into mourning for seven years, at which time Daniel dismisses the mourners and burns incense in sacrifice to the gods. Pughat prays to the gods to bless her in her venture and disguises herself as [Anat](#), intending to wreck vengeance upon those who slew Aqhat.

Aqhat

The much anticipated child of [Daniel](#) and Danatay, Aqhat is presented with a bow and arrows set made by [Kothar-and-Khasis](#) early in his life by his father at a feast. Daniel reminds him to take the best of his kills to the temple for the gods. At the feast [Anat](#) offers Aqhat riches and eternal life if he would give her the bow. When he refuses, she promises to deliver vengeance upon him should he ever transgress. Presumably he fails to offer his best kills to the gods. Later he follows a disguised Anat to Qart-Abilim but presumably thwarts her new scheme to acquire his bow and lives there for a time, possibly under the favor of Yarikh. He is left on a mountain and while sitting for a meal is attacked by Anat's attendant Yatpan in the form of an eagle, along with other birds of prey, and is slain. Following his death, the land is poisoned and there is a period of famine and drought. Daniel recovers his son's remains from the eagle [S,umul](#).

Later, Daniel visits the underworld, probably in hopes of recovering Aqhat, and there encounters the [Rephaim](#).

Pughat

She is one of [Daniel](#) and Danatay's daughters. When [Aqhat](#) is slain, She notices the eagles and the drought and becomes upset. Daniel prays that [Baal](#) might return the rains and travels among the fields coaxing the few living plants to grow and wishing that Aqhat were there to help harvest them. Pughat encounters Aqhat's servants and learns of his demise. After seven years of Daniel's court mourning, Daniel dismisses the mourners and burns incense in sacrifice to the gods. Pughat prays to the gods to bless her in her venture and disguises herself as [Anat](#), intending to wreck vengeance upon those who slew Aqhat. She arrives and meets Yatpan, accepting his wine, and the rest is missing.

Men in general

from a side note (Gibson p. 68) men are considered made of 'clay'.

III. What about their cosmology? (Divine geography)

Little is certain about the cosmology of the Canaanites. While the Ugaritic texts tell us of El, Athirat, and Rahmay's creation of the gracious gods, for the creation of the universe we must rely on the Greek sources of Philo of Byblos, Athenaeus, and Damascius, which are thoroughly drenched in Greek cosmology. In general they relate that from gods like chaos, ether, air, wind and desire was produced the egg Mot, which was probably not the same Mot as found in Ugarit. The egg was populated with creatures who remained motionless until it was opened, whence the sky and heavenly bodies were formed. Later the waters were separated from the sky, and gods of El's generation were

formed. Additional hints about the divine geography gathered from the Ugarit texts are included below:

Mt. Lel

Where the assembly of the gods meet. It is [El](#)'s abode and the source of the rivers and two oceans, as well as where those waters meet those of the firmament. It lies 'two layers beneath the wells of the earth, three spans beneath its marshes.' It had been thought to be a field and not a mountain. The mansion there has eight entrances and seven chambers.

hmry 'Miry'

[Mot](#)'s city in the underworld, "where a pit is the throne on which he sits, filth the land of his heritage." (Gibson p. 66)

the underworld

'the place of freedom'. The Aramaeans believed that the souls of the blessed dead ate with Baal-Hadad.

Targhizizi and Tharumagi

These are the twin mountains which hold the firmament up above the earth-circling ocean, thereby bounding the earth. The entrance to the underworld and [Shapshu](#)'s 'grave'. It is entered by lifting up a rock to a wooded height. The entrance is bounded by a river-shore land of pasture and fields known ironically as "Pleasure" or "Delight".

Ughar or Inbab

This is the location of [Anat](#)'s mansion.

Mt. Zephon

Either the mountain is deified and holy, godlike in proportion, or [El](#) has a pavilion there. It has recesses within which [Baal](#) holds his feast. Baal had his first house of cedar and brick there, as well as his second house of gold, silver, and lapis-lazuli.

IV. Source material:

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V. Additional material of interest.

I've been corresponding with Gwen Saylor about this FAQ and other matters and she has been kind enough to allow me to reproduce her commentary on version 0.3. The first section of the e-letter is

part of our discussion about Helel, and the commentary on this FAQ begins with the line "Second Topic -- Phoenician FAQ --".

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Compiled by Robert Bedrosian, 2022.

[Folklore/Mythology](#)-related uploads to Internet Archive, by Robert Bedrosian.